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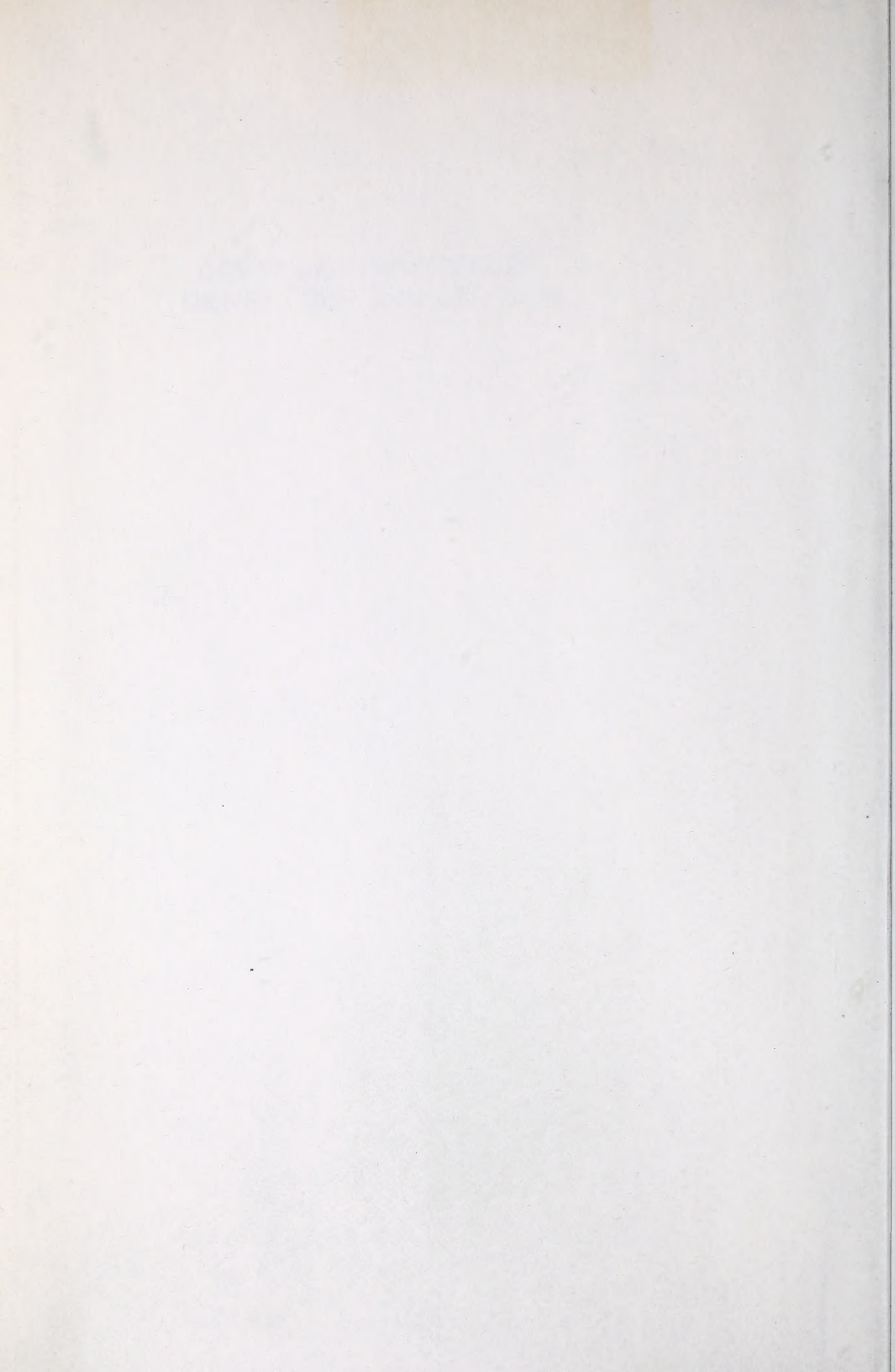
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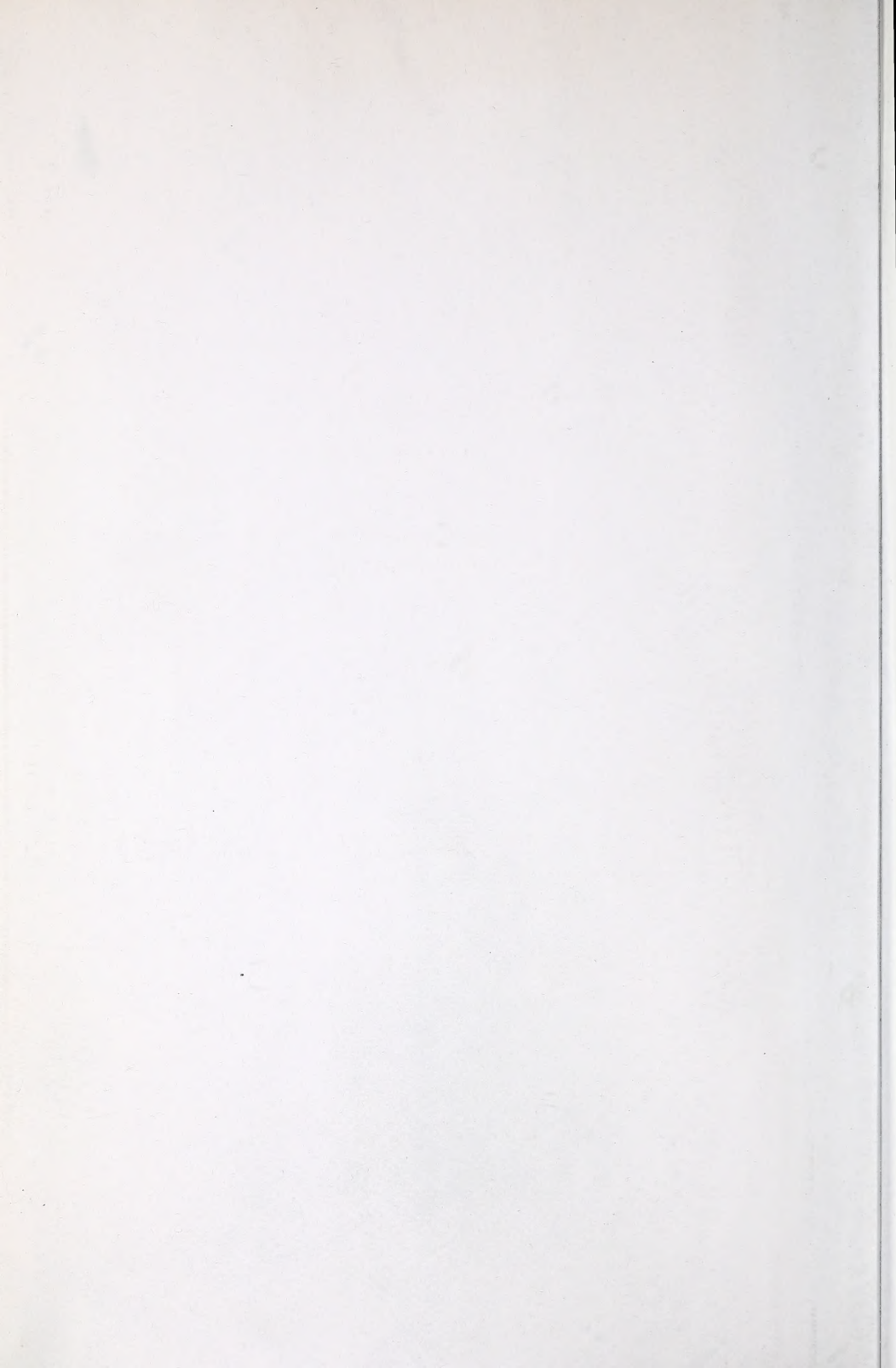
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# HISTORY

OF

# WESTMINSTER

MASSACHUSETTS

(FIRST NAMED NARRAGANSETT NO. 2)

FROM THE DATE OF THE ORIGINAL GRANT OF THE  
TOWNSHIP TO THE PRESENT TIME

1728-1893

Pt. I

WITH

A BIOGRAPHIC-GENEALOGICAL REGISTER OF ITS PRINCIPAL FAMILIES

BY

WILLIAM SWEETZER HEYWOOD

MEMBER OF THE NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC-GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
AND CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE WORCESTER  
SOCIETY OF ANTIQUITY.

LOWELL, MASS.:

VOX POPULI PRESS: S. W. HUSE & CO.

1893.

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HISTORY

WESTMINSTER

WESTMINSTER

FROM THE DATE OF THE ORIGINAL CHARTER

TO THE PRESENT TIME

THE GREAT CHARTER

LOUISIANA STATE CO. INC.

1328-1801

1328-1801

A HISTORY OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER

WESTMINSTER

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER

WESTMINSTER

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER



1823679



Wm. S. Heywood.

1823629

Wm. J. Ferguson



TO  
THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF WESTMINSTER,  
WHEREVER RESIDING,

AND  
Their Children and Successors unto many Generations;

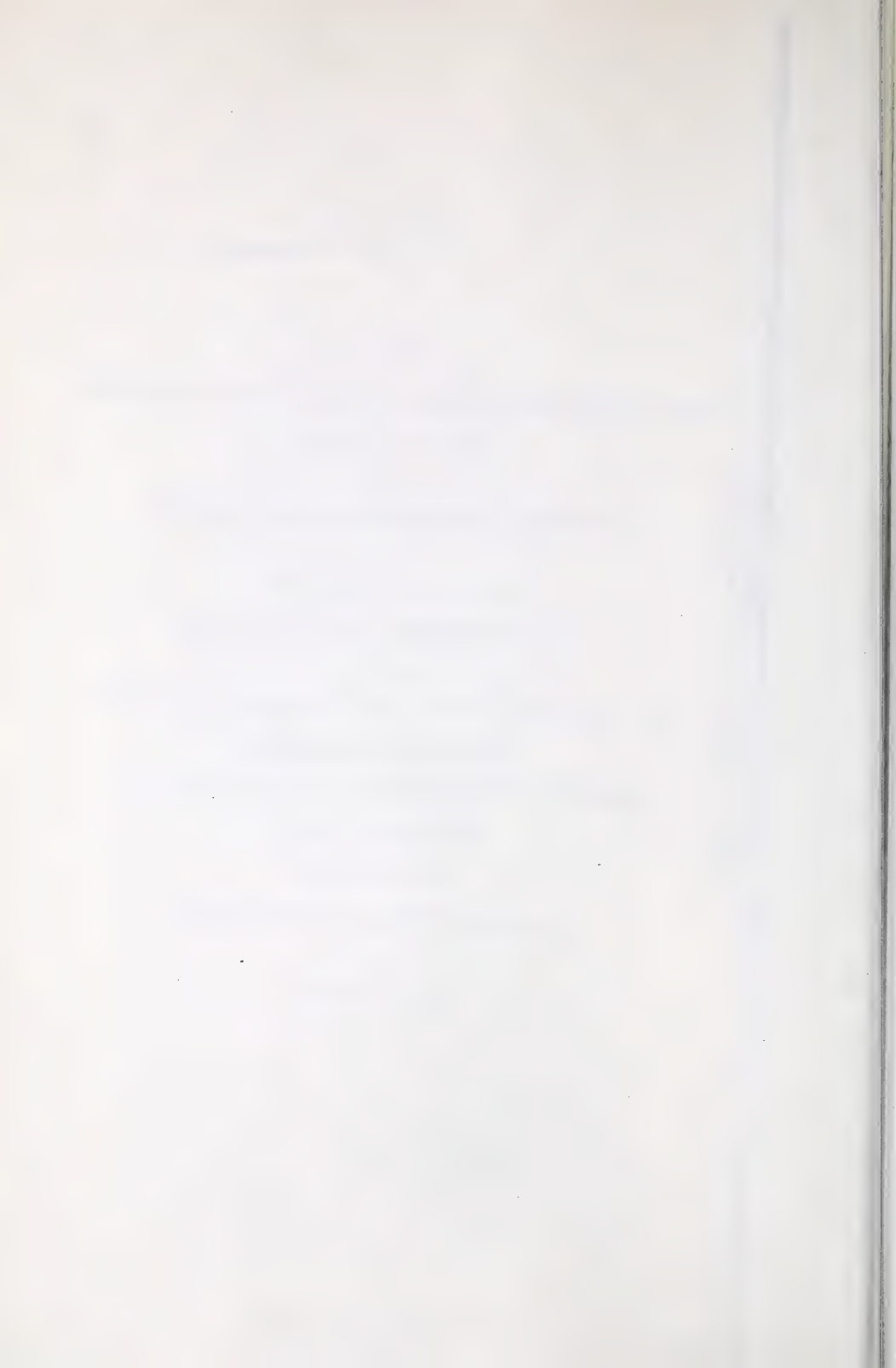
ALSO,  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
THE FOUNDERS OF THE TOWN,

AND OF  
ALL THOSE WHO HAVE DWELT WITHIN ITS BORDERS,  
ENJOYED ITS PRIVILEGES,  
CONTRIBUTED TO ITS GROWTH AND PROSPERITY,  
AND PASSED AWAY,

THIS VOLUME  
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY  
THE AUTHOR.

*Goodspeed - 27.50*



## PREFACE

---

IN the summer of 1883 it was my privilege to attend, for the first time, one of the annual gatherings at Wachusett Park, known in the general neighborhood as "The Old Folks' Picnic." As I conversed with different elderly people there, and listened to the formal addresses of the occasion, composed largely of reminiscences and tales of by-gone days, I was impressed with the desirability and importance of having a comprehensive History of Westminster published, not only to rescue from oblivion many interesting facts, incidents, and events, which otherwise would soon be irretrievably lost to human knowledge, but also for the purpose of collating, condensing, and having in readily accessible form, whatever might be found in any public records relating to the town, of permanent value to the citizens, to the public at large, or to the student of past times. And in the same connection it occurred to me that, possibly, I might be prompted to undertake the task indicated *myself* at some future day, should circumstances permit; little realizing, however, what an amount of time, research, and wearisome labor would be required for its accomplishment.

Not long after this I took up my abode in the city of Boston, having been called to a post of professional service there, locating in the immediate vicinity of the rooms of the New England Historic-Genealogical Society,—a vast repository of such lore as the name indicates,—and of the State House, where are extensive stores of information pertaining to the settlement and early affairs of the older towns of the Commonwealth. Under the influence of the impression alluded to, I very soon fell into the way of visiting one or the other of these places

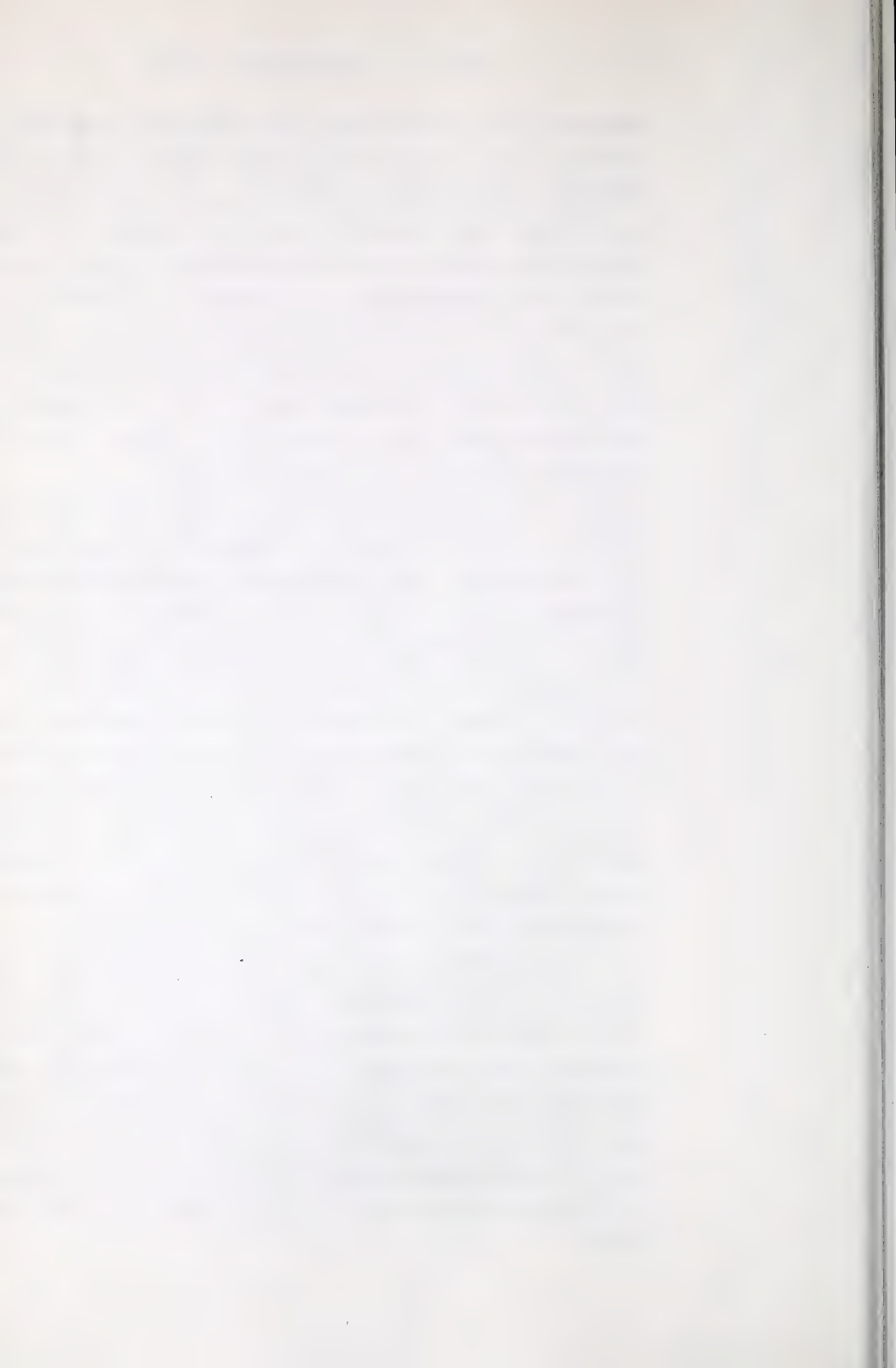




whenever I had a leisure hour, and of collecting such data as might be of service to me should I ever conclude to carry the suggestion accompanying it into effect. The continuance of this practice for three or four years, and the custom of spending several weeks each summer in town, interviewing the older portion of the population, and indeed all whom I thought could aid me in my investigations, or at Worcester or Cambridge, in searching the various registries and documents there, resulted in such a growing interest in the matter on my part, and in such an accumulation of valuable material, that the question of going forward and completing what had been so effectively begun became one of serious moment to me, and one not to be put aside or answered without due deliberation.

Before a satisfactory conclusion in regard to it could be reached, it was necessary to ascertain where and how the money that would be required to publish the proposed work was to be obtained. An application was therefore made to the citizens of the town in this behalf, the response to which was highly gratifying and satisfactory. At the annual meeting in 1888, it was voted, with very few dissenting voices, that the town purchase four hundred copies of the History when it should be published, at the rate of three and a half dollars per copy, making an aggregate sum of fourteen hundred dollars. A committee consisting of Artemas Merriam, Joseph Hager, Daniel C. Miles, Theodore S. Wood, and Edward S. Kendall was chosen to advise and co-operate with me in promoting the end in view. At the same meeting, as a token of good faith and of kindly feeling on the part of the citizens, a gratuity of five hundred dollars was voted me, and paid at an early day.

Thus encouraged and assured, I entered at once upon the labor of preparing the material at my command, with such additions as subsequently were made to it, for the press, and from that date to the present have devoted to it the greater part of my time and energy. That labor has grown upon my hands to such an extent that the volume resulting from it exceeds the limit first proposed by more than one hundred and fifty pages, increasing the cost thereby some twenty per cent., which, with the introduction of several illustrations not included in the original estimate, will virtually consume the gratuity received.





In what I have written, it has been my endeavor to produce a *history* and not a *romance*. I have verified the statements made for the most part by referring to original authorities, or, when this was impracticable, have found reasons for them that seemed to me sound and satisfactory. Doubt in any instance has been duly expressed by some qualifying word or phrase. Town, County, and State records have furnished me, essentially, the foundation upon which the superstructure has been built, and these have been supplemented by personal interviews, diaries, and memoranda, family registries, tomb-stone inscriptions, hundreds of circulars and letters scattered far and wide, even to the most remote parts of the country, published town and family histories, and by every known device by which I could gain the information I desired and make the work complete and trustworthy.

I have also striven to write in a spirit of strict impartiality, purposing to treat all with whom I have had to do with fairness and equity. I have, as far as possible, divested myself of all personal and partisan feeling or prejudice whenever I deemed it necessary to exercise and express an opinion or pass judgment, and have tried to deal justly and honorably by all concerned. No doubt I have erred in some instances, partly from a limitation of knowledge, partly from misinformation, but never, I can honestly say, intentionally or from unworthy motives.

Moreover, it has been my resolute determination, from the beginning and at every point involving moral considerations, to commend and honor virtue and piety—all those qualities which adorn, ennoble, and glorify human character, and tend to make human life the image of the life of the all-perfect God. Under the same guidance, I have sought to exert a salutary influence upon the social relations of men, expressing admiration for, and lending encouragement to, whatever is calculated to promote the welfare, prosperity, and happiness of the community, and make of this present world an outlying province of the kingdom of heaven.

In the prosecution of my work it has been a source of constant and profound regret that I have not been able to do what I believe to be full justice to *woman*,—to bring her into greater prominence, and assign her to her rightful place in the com-

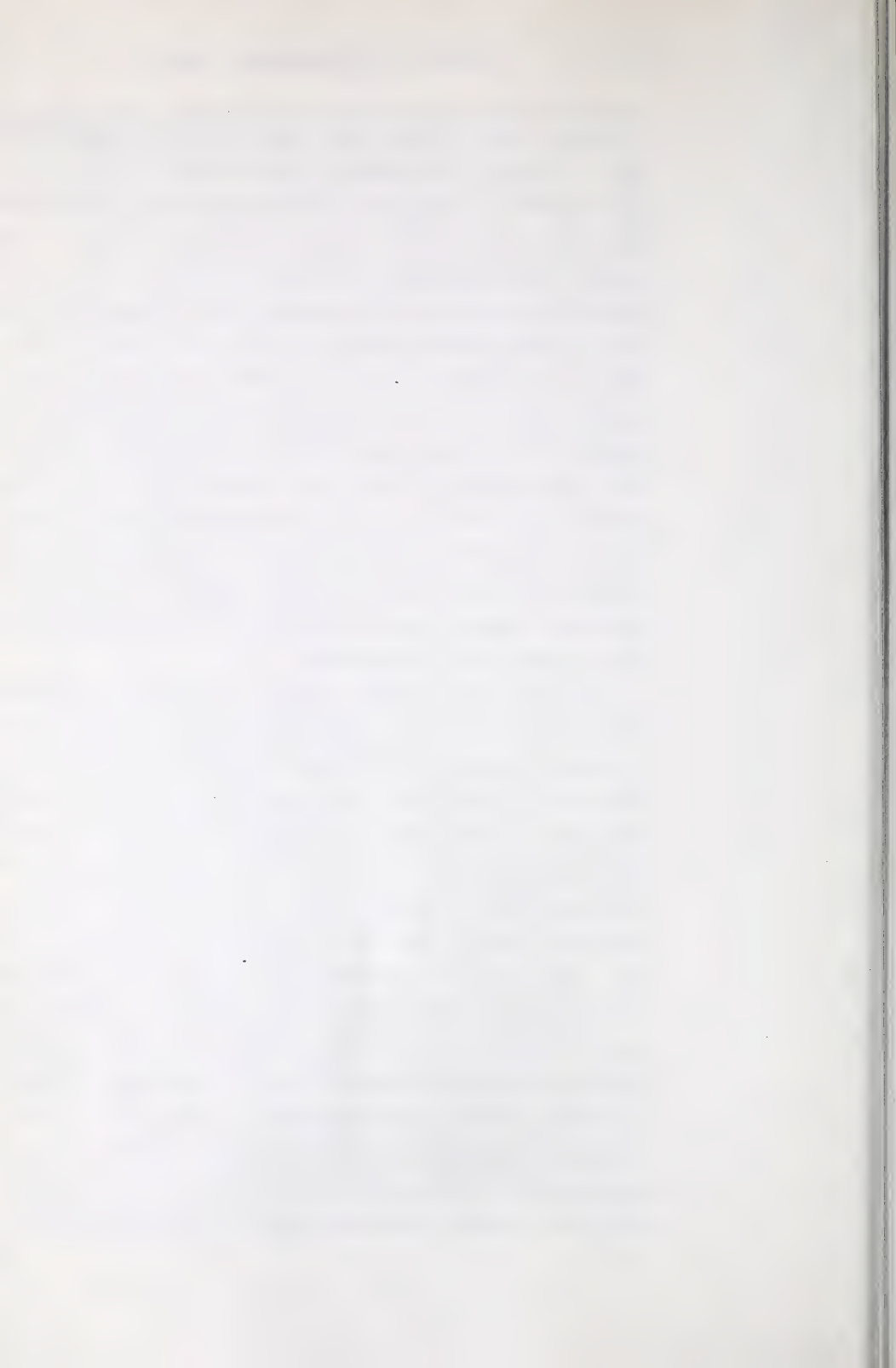


munity and town whose historic features this volume assumes to portray. But this has been found to be practically impossible. Society, in its present organic form, not only makes little account of woman, but, for the most part, excludes her from view. In all public concerns man is at the front: man alone, with rare exceptions, appears in all public records. And history, general and local, is written accordingly. Yet, woman is an essential part of every community, and constitutes a vital factor in every problem affecting the common welfare and happiness. In the home, which is the heart of modern civilization, in moral and religious concerns, in church work, in humane and charitable enterprises, in educational activities, she has proved herself to be a great power for good, contributing her equal share to the promotion of the higher interests, and to the development of the best life, of all classes and conditions of people. Such, in my judgment, has been the case in Westminster, and not to recognize and record the fact in some positive way in this History would render it radically defective,—would be to withhold the tribute of respect and honor from great numbers of those to whom such tribute is due.

This book, in all important respects, is emphatically my own. The general plan of it is of my devising, and I am alone responsible for the selection, classification, and general treatment of the numerous subjects represented. With the exception of the "Sketches" of the First Congregational and Baptist Churches, which were prepared by Revs. Charles M. Palmer and Lyman Partridge, respectively,—favors hereby gratefully acknowledged,—I have written every word to be found within its lids. The material kindly furnished me by others, I have examined, condensed, arranged, and put in proper shape for the printer's use. The illustrations are virtually of my selection, although most of them were introduced by the consent and approval of the "Committee on the History," chosen by the town. I have also had charge of all the business details connected with the printing and binding of the work, and with whatever was needful to make it ready for its readers, and for a place in the lengthening catalogue of the town histories of New England.

Of the illustrations it may be said that the full page portraits were furnished by the persons they represent or their immediate relatives or friends; private residences and places of business





by their owners; and houses of worship by the societies to whom they belong. The expense of landscapes, with a single exception, of the Soldiers' Monument, the Second Meetinghouse (the internal plan of which, mentioned on page 277, I am obliged to omit), and also of the map and Proprietors' plan is included in the aggregate cost of the book. For the electrotype engraving of Gen. Nelson A. Miles I am indebted to S. F. Blanchard & Co., of Worcester; and for the wood-cut of the "Garfield House," to the American Antiquarian Society and its accomplished librarian, Edmund M. Barton, as I am for many other favors.

In this connection it may be stated that of the more than forty pictorial embellishments which appear in the following pages, all the landscapes and other out-door views were made by W. P. Allen, of Gardner, whose work in that line of art is of unsurpassed excellence. About half of the personal likenesses were also the products of his labor and skill; the remainder coming from the establishment of the Lux Engraving Co., Boston. The map of the town was made by the Boston Heliotype Printing Co., and the wood-cut of the meetinghouse by John M. Keenan, Worcester. The printing, by S. W. Huse & Co., Lowell, and the binding, by N. Wilson & Co., Boston, speak for themselves, and reflect much credit upon those under whose supervision they were respectively done.

I cheerfully and gratefully acknowledge my obligations to the very many persons who have furnished me with information, or with facilities for obtaining information, suited to my purpose, or who have in any way aided me, by word or deed, in carrying that purpose into effect. The list of such, including town and parish clerks, librarians and their subordinates, custodians of public records, historical and genealogical writers and students, and a multitude of private individuals, is too long for insertion here. I can only therefore, in a general way, express my profound sense of their kindness, and extend to them, one and all, my hearty thanks for their many favors and tokens of friendly interest in my long and arduous undertaking.

The History of Westminster, so far as it is condensed and embodied in the present volume, is at length completed and ready for distribution. In the hope that in some good degree it may serve its purposed end, gratify the sons and daughters

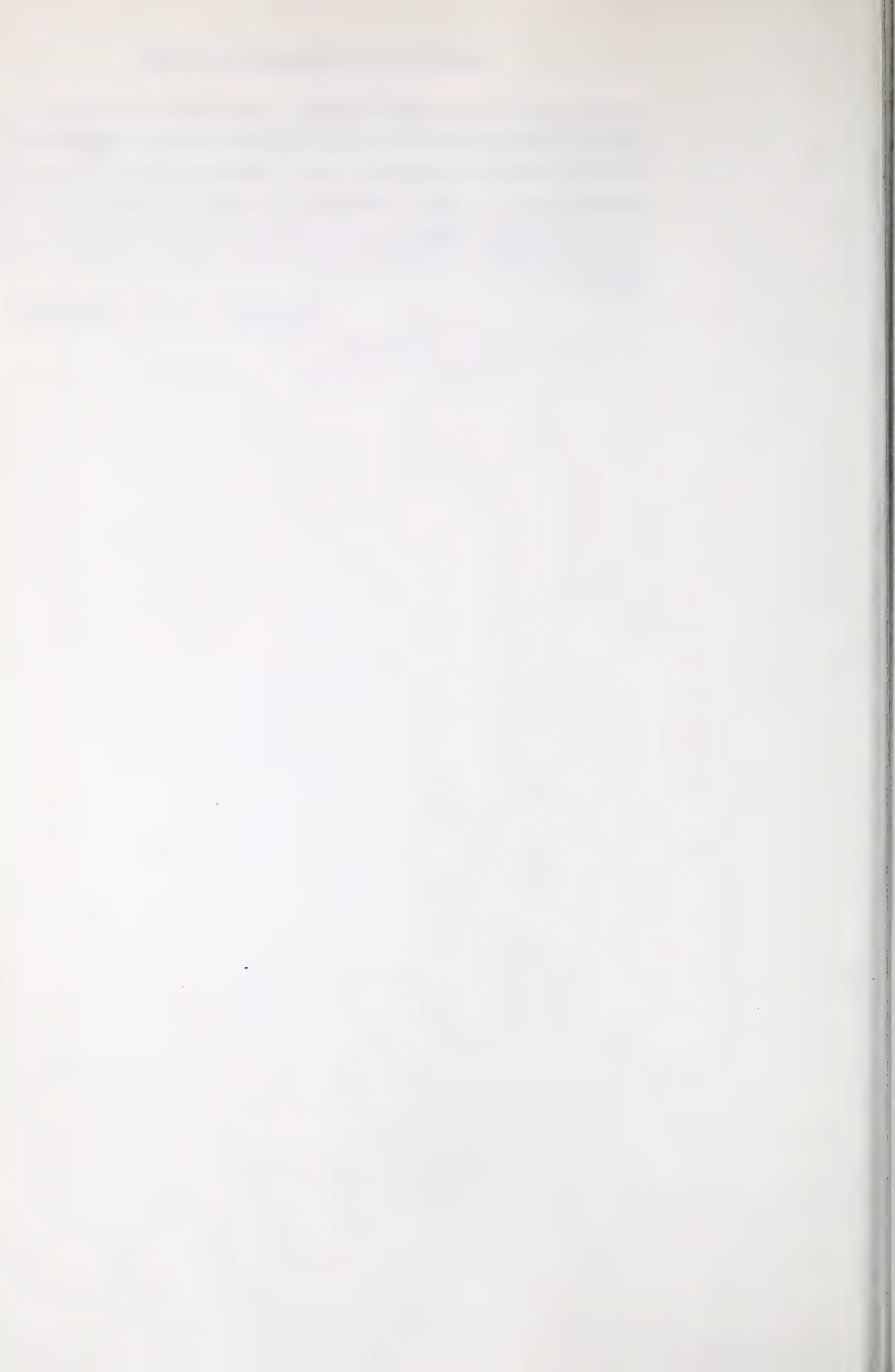


of the place of my own nativity, and prove to be a not unworthy contribution to the historical literature of the last decade of the nineteenth century, I send it forth on its proper mission, commending it to the considerate attention of those for whom it was specially designed, and of all who are interested in the particular field of exploration and inquiry which it distinctively represents.

WILLIAM S. HEYWOOD.

STERLING, MASS., June, 1893.





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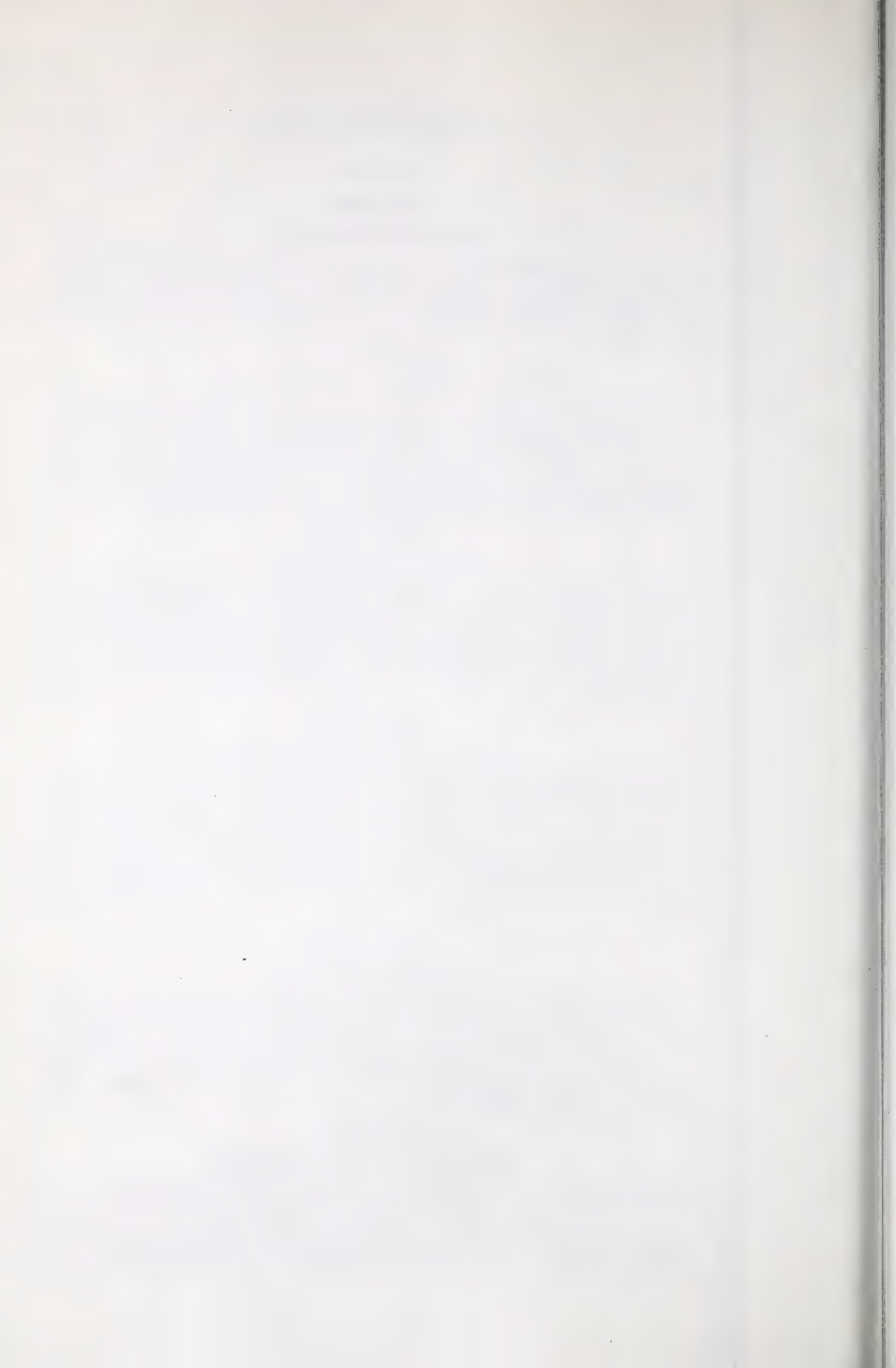
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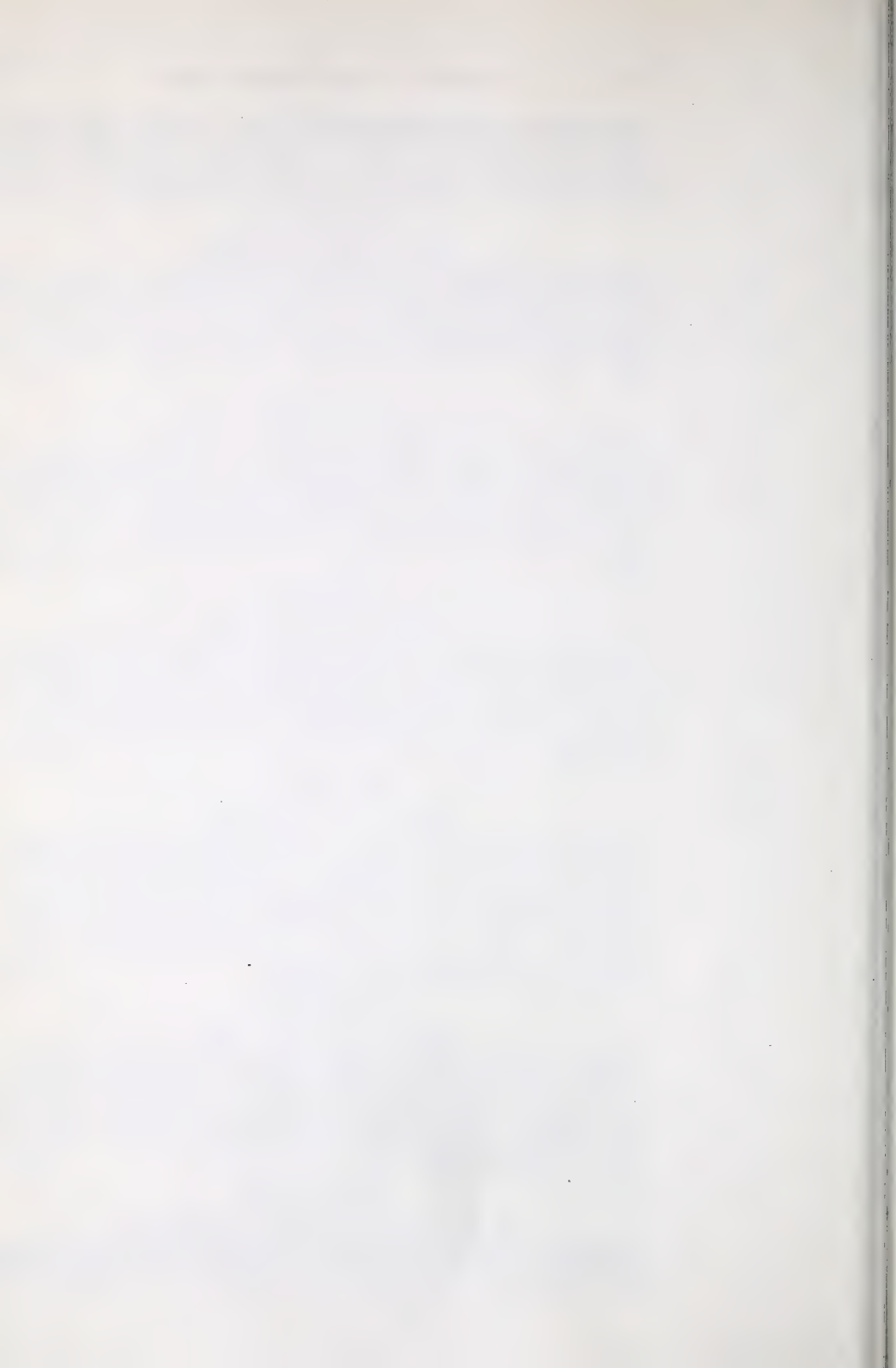
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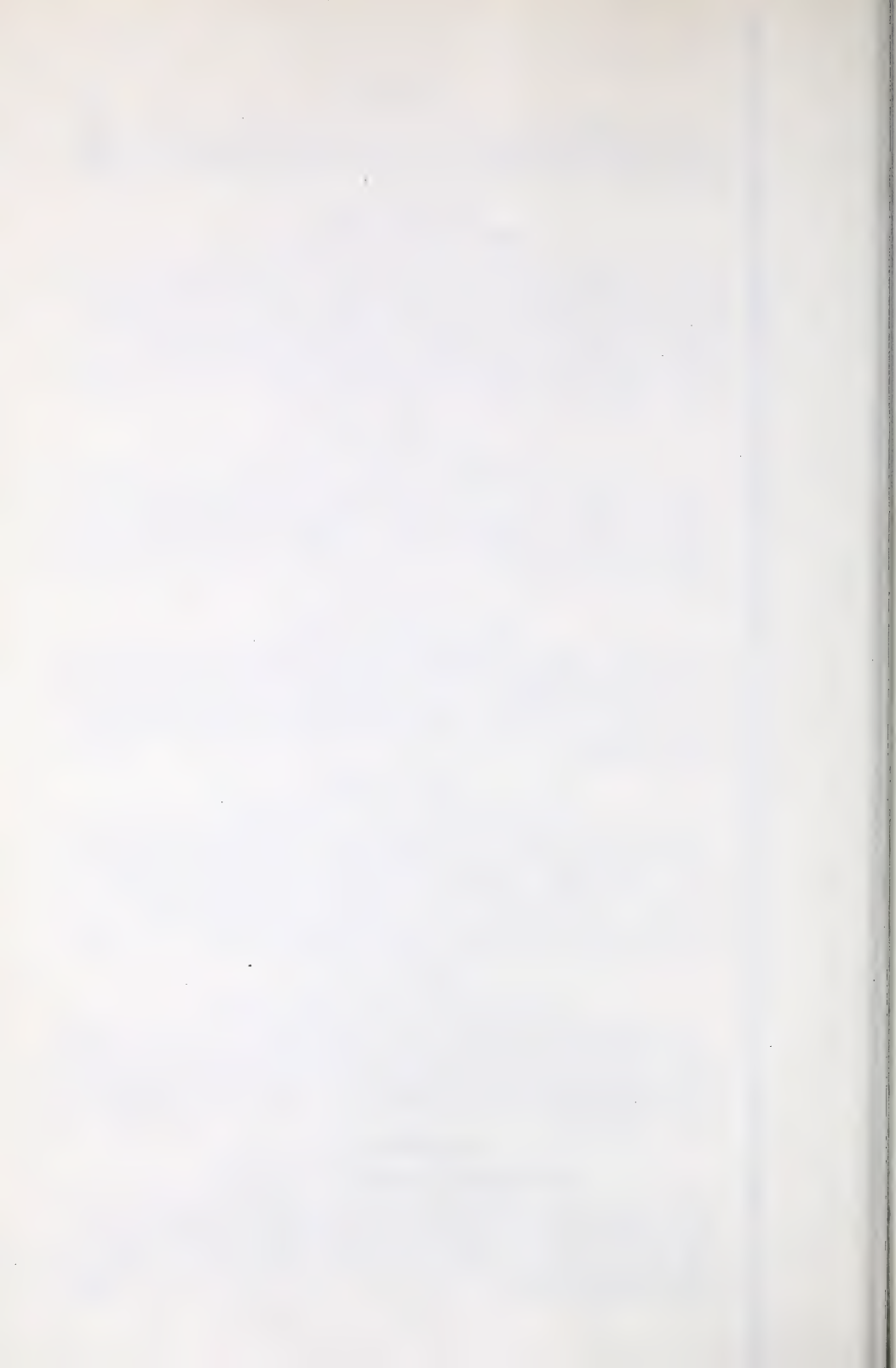
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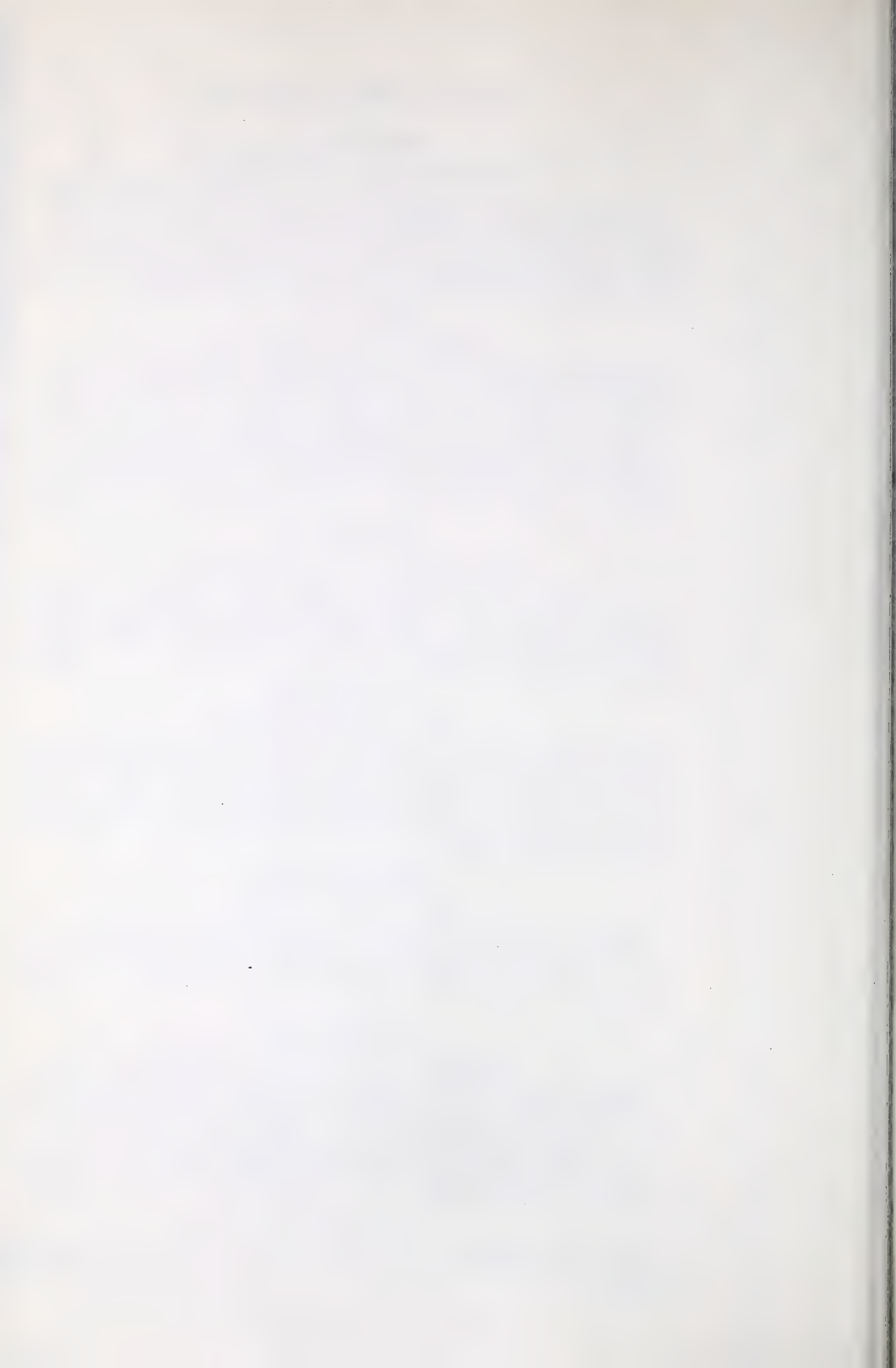
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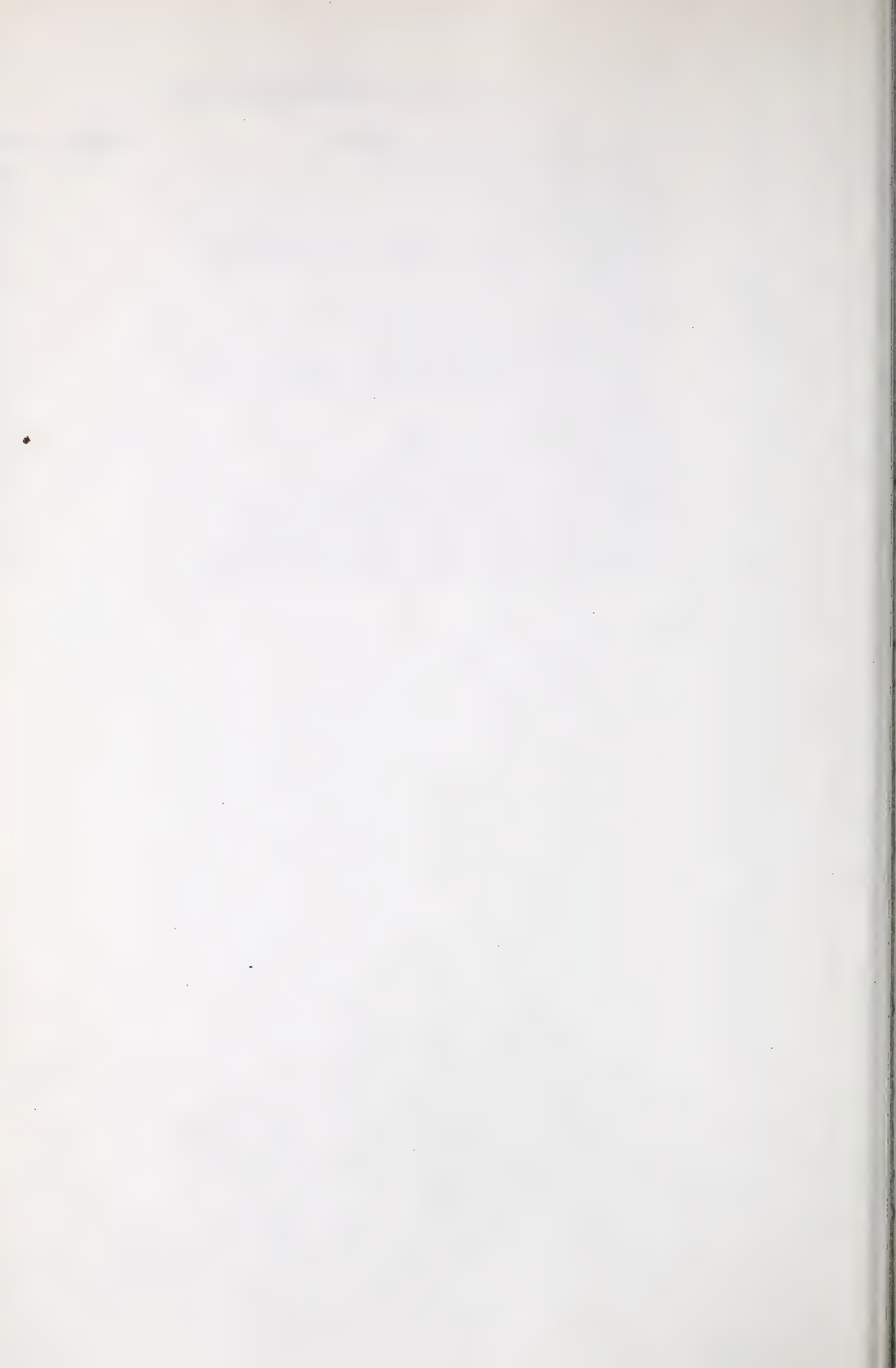
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# HISTORY OF WESTMINSTER, MASS.

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## PART ONE.

### *DESCRIPTIVE REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS.*

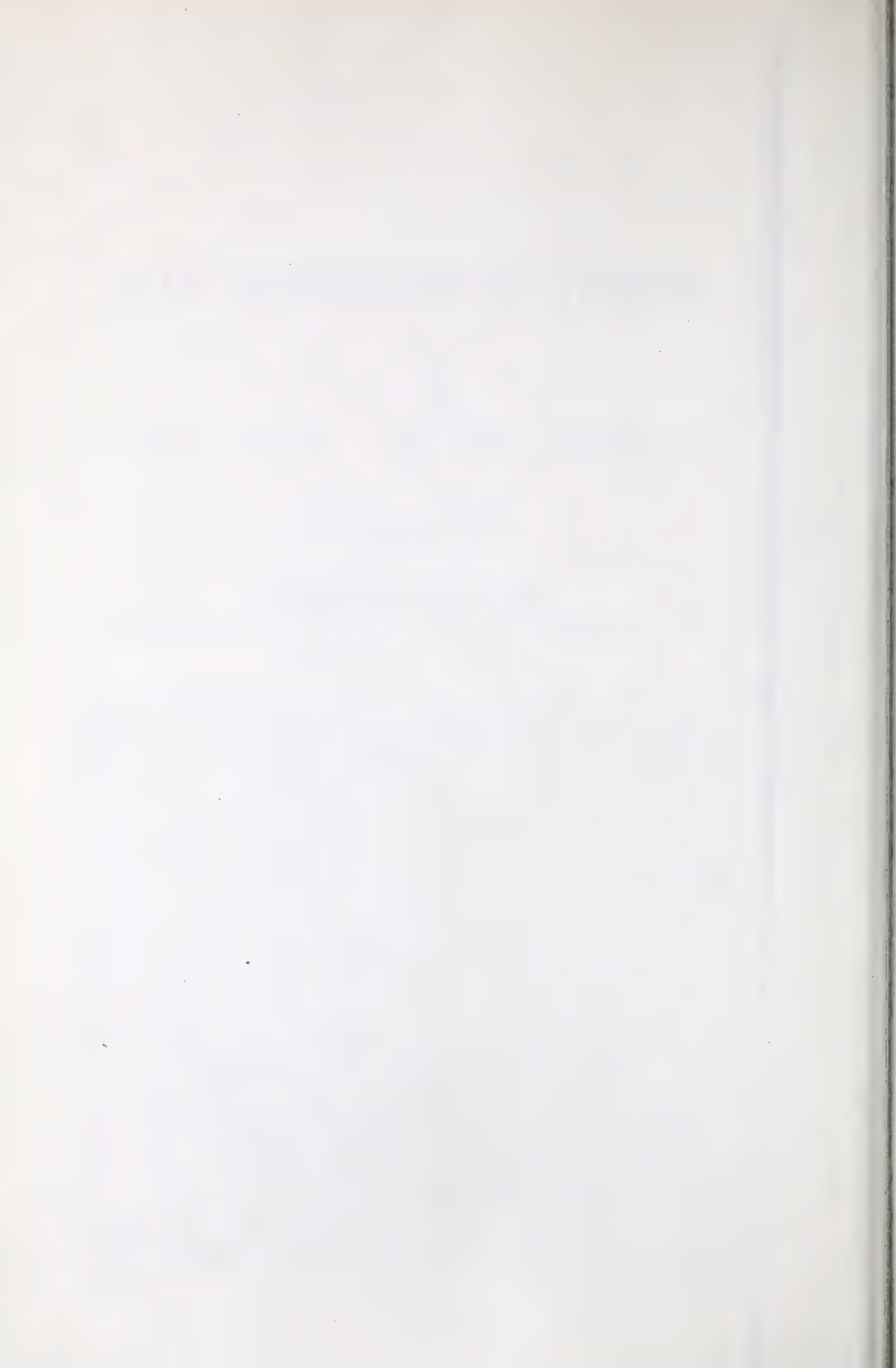
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## CHAPTER I.

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SPECIAL LOCALITIES.

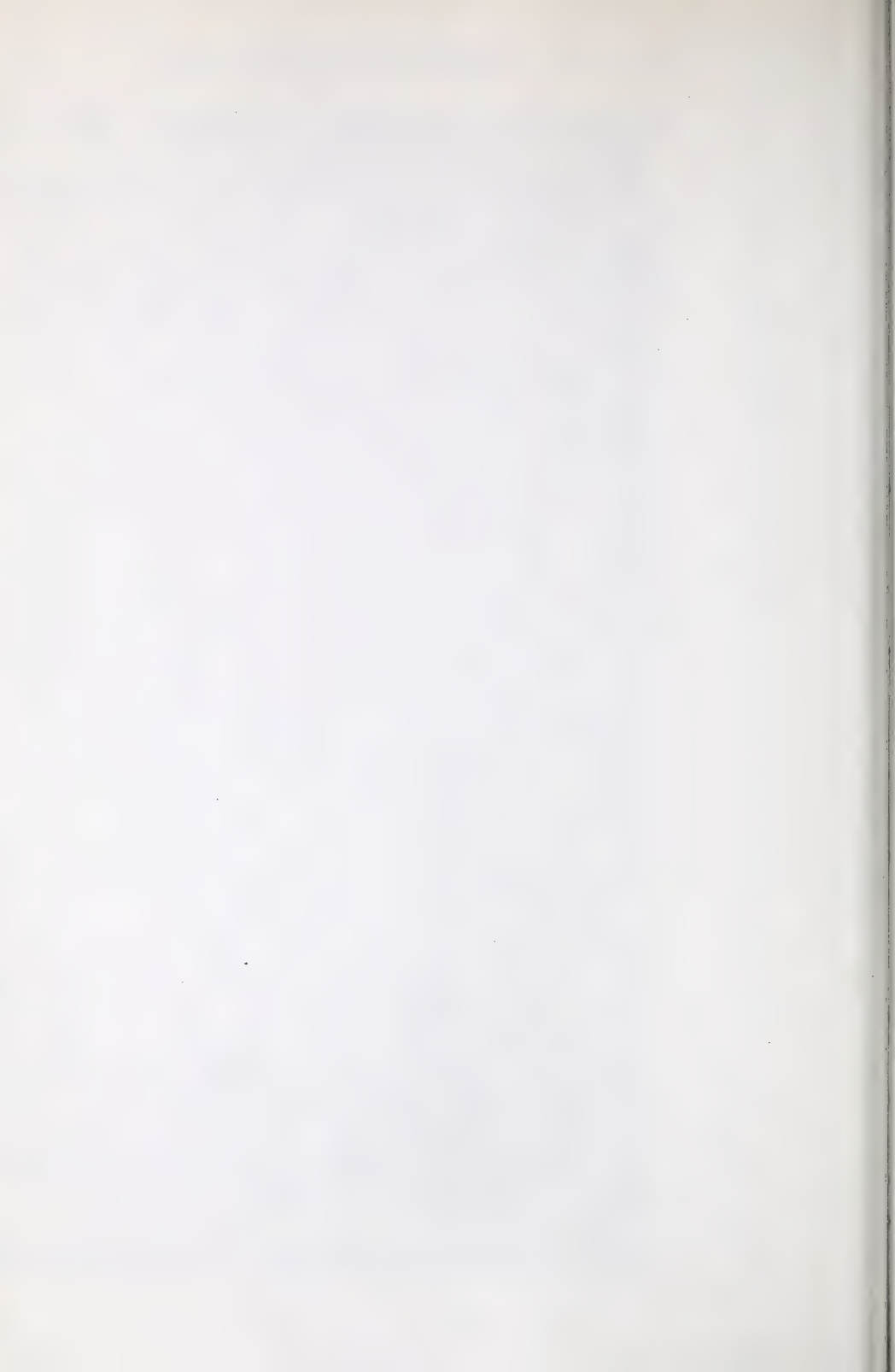
THE town of Westminster is one of the old municipal bodies of which the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was originally composed. The story of its existence begins at a period lying far beyond the time when the British colonies in America separated from the parent government across the sea, and laid upon these shores the foundations of a mighty nation, composed of subordinate, co-related states. Its territory was derived from previously unappropriated lands by grant of the provincial legislature, acting under the authority of "Parliament and Crown"; its early proprietors acknowledged loyal subjection to King George II; and its mandates and behests for many years were issued and executed "in His Majesty's name." Nevertheless, it was peopled by men and women of sturdy Puritan stock, who had breathed the airs and imbibed the spirit of civil and religious liberty; "who knew their rights, and knowing dared maintain" them; and who, sympathizing heartily in the great movement for freedom and independence which arose in the latter half of the eighteenth century, shared with their compatriots the hardships and sacrifices incident to the struggle that ensued, as they also shared the happy fortunes subsequently resulting from a well-earned victory. The place this town has filled in New England society and the part it has played in the great drama of American life—the polity it has maintained, the activities it has put in motion, and the achievements it has won, during its long and not wholly un-



eventful career, it is the purpose and office of this volume to duly delineate, record, and publish to the world.

**Name.** The *name* of the town, thus introduced to the reader's notice, is one widely known in the world, associated, as it has been for generations, with both the civil and religious interests of the English realm, and found, as it frequently is, on the pages of English literature and in the annals of English life. It is of Anglo-Saxon derivation and of very ancient date. Traced to its origin, it leads back to the time when the course of empire was passing over from the continent of Europe to the British Isles, and when the crude elements of English nationality were emerging from chaos and crystalizing into the forms and institutions of modern society. It is a compound word, formed by the union of two primitive ones, to wit:— *West*, a cardinal point of the compass, and *minster*, signifying church, making the combination stand for *the West church*. How this combination took place and how the resultant term, Westminster, came into use, are matters easily explained. The first converts to Christianity in the mother country erected, at a very early period, a house of worship in the heart of the already existing "city of London," and dedicated it to the Apostle Paul, the original of the cathedral now bearing the name of that saint; and also, about the same time, a similar structure, in the midst of a settlement some two miles to the westward, which they consecrated to St. Peter. To distinguish these from each other, on the basis of their relative position, the former was sometimes called the *East minster*, or house of religious convocation, and the latter the *West minster*. As time went on, however, the first assumed permanently its apostolic designation, while the other retained the one given it by reason of its location, which in due time took on its consolidated form, Westminster; a name that was afterwards applied, not to the ecclesiastical structure alone, but to the whole section of country adjacent thereto. With the growth of the nation, that locality increased in population, wealth, and importance, till it became the "city of Westminster," and until it was finally incorporated, with the "city of London" and contiguous boroughs, as a constituent part of the kingdom's metropolis. In fact, it rose to be, as it still is, the most noteworthy part of that metropolis—the part not only in which stands the renowned abbey bearing its name, but in which cluster the great interests of the empire,—where the houses of parliament and all the important public offices are situated, where culture and refinement chiefly center, and where are displayed more than in any other locality, the glittering ensigns of royalty and the proud emblems of a mighty nation's majesty, power, and glory.

From this most famous quarter of the English capital the town of Westminster took its name,—a name borne by five





other municipalities in the United States, which thereby share with this one whatever dignity, honor, or prestige has been imparted to a common designation, by reason of its high antiquity and the distinguished associations it has so long enjoyed. At whose suggestion, or by whose agency, it was adopted in the case under notice, there are no records, so far as is known, to show. It is not mentioned in the petition of the inhabitants of the territory involved, praying the general court of the Province of Massachusetts Bay for an act of incorporation, nor does it appear in the journals of the two houses of that body, detailing the processes by which the request of the petitioners was finally enacted into law. A careful examination, however, of the engrossed copy of the legislative bill which was formally signed by the governor, Thomas Pownell, in order to make the incorporative act complete, discloses a key to the secret,—a solution of the problem every way reasonable and satisfactory. By such an examination it is rendered clear that the word *Westminster*, wherever it stands in the body of the instrument, is in the same handwriting as is the signature of the chief magistrate, the space which that word occupies in any instance having evidently been left unfilled by the transcriber, as it was unquestionably unfilled in the original document. This being the case, it is proper and justifiable to infer that no name whatever was used during the legislative proceedings, nor until the enactment came before the executive for his approval, when he himself, of his own free will and judgment, and in the exercise of a privilege often accorded one in his position by the custom of the time, supplied the vacant places and honored the new town with an appellation by which it has ever since been known, and with which its citizens and friends have never had reason to be otherwise than abundantly satisfied.

**Situation.** Westminster is a distinctively country town, being located in the centrally-northern part of the County of Worcester, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, midway between the eastern extremity of Cape Ann and the line of the State of New York on the west. It occupies an elevated position upon the range of highlands which separate the waters of the Connecticut River from those of the Merrimac. The geographical situation of its central village is  $42^{\circ} 32\frac{3}{4}'$  north latitude and  $71^{\circ} 54\frac{3}{4}'$  west longitude from Greenwich, or  $5^{\circ} 8'$  east longitude from Washington. It is bounded on the north by Gardner and Ashburnham; on the east by Fitchburg, Leominster, and Princeton; on the south by Princeton and Hubbardston; and on the west by Hubbardston, Gardner, and Ashburnham. Its mean height above the level of the sea is about one thousand feet. The town hall, as nearly as can be estimated, is twenty and a half miles, by a direct line a little west of north, from the Court House in Worcester, and about forty-eight miles, by a similar measurement W. N. W., from the State House in Boston.



By the carriage way the distance from Worcester is nearly twenty-two miles, while the railway station, two miles eastward from the town hall, is fifty-five miles from Boston along the line of the track. The extreme length of the town from north to south on a meridian line is not far from eight miles, and its extreme width on a line parallel to the equator is about six miles. Its most remote points are nearly nine miles from each other. It has an estimated area of twenty-three thousand acres, or thirty-six square miles. Its population numbers not far from sixteen hundred persons, about three-fifths of whom are distributed at large over its territory, being connected with the agricultural interests of the place, the remaining two-fifths residing in more compact neighborhoods, where mechanical operations offer favorable opportunities for remunerative labor and self-support. The principal of these neighborhoods is at what is called "The Center," — a village containing nearly a hundred dwelling-houses, three churches, three stores for traffic in general merchandize, a commodious town hall, an hotel, an extensive bakery, a bank, a large chair manufactory, several small shops for minor industrial purposes, and numerous subordinate buildings. Every thing there is kept in excellent order and repair, and the whole presents a neat and attractive appearance. Few country villages are more comely and pleasing to the view than this, and few are more indicative of thrift, competence, comfort, domestic and social content, and happiness. Wachusettville is located two miles east of the Center, and has within its limits two paper mills and about twenty-five dwellings, with the usual accompaniments. South Westminster is somewhat smaller, and is situated a mile from the Center, on the slope of land which rises gently from the southwestern extremity of Meeting-house Pond. It is of recent growth, having sprung up as an adjunct of a large and flourishing chair manufactory established there some forty years ago. A few dwellings and a small chair factory and other buildings connected therewith, located near each other, about two miles north of the Center, constitute what is called "Whitman's Village," or sometimes "Scrabble Hollow" — the former name having been derived from a prominent family which first settled there and for many years occupied an influential position in that part of the town.

**Climate.** The climate of Westminster, situated as it is considerably above tide water, and almost wholly beyond the reach of the modifying influence of oceanic breezes and currents of the sea, is inconstant, frequently disagreeable, and in some respects trying to the human constitution, but can not be regarded as specially prejudicial to health and length of days. It is characterized by great extremes of heat and cold, and by sudden and violent changes which affect to a large extent the annual fall of rain and snow and the general dryness or humidity of the atmosphere, with their attendant sanitary qualities, ten-



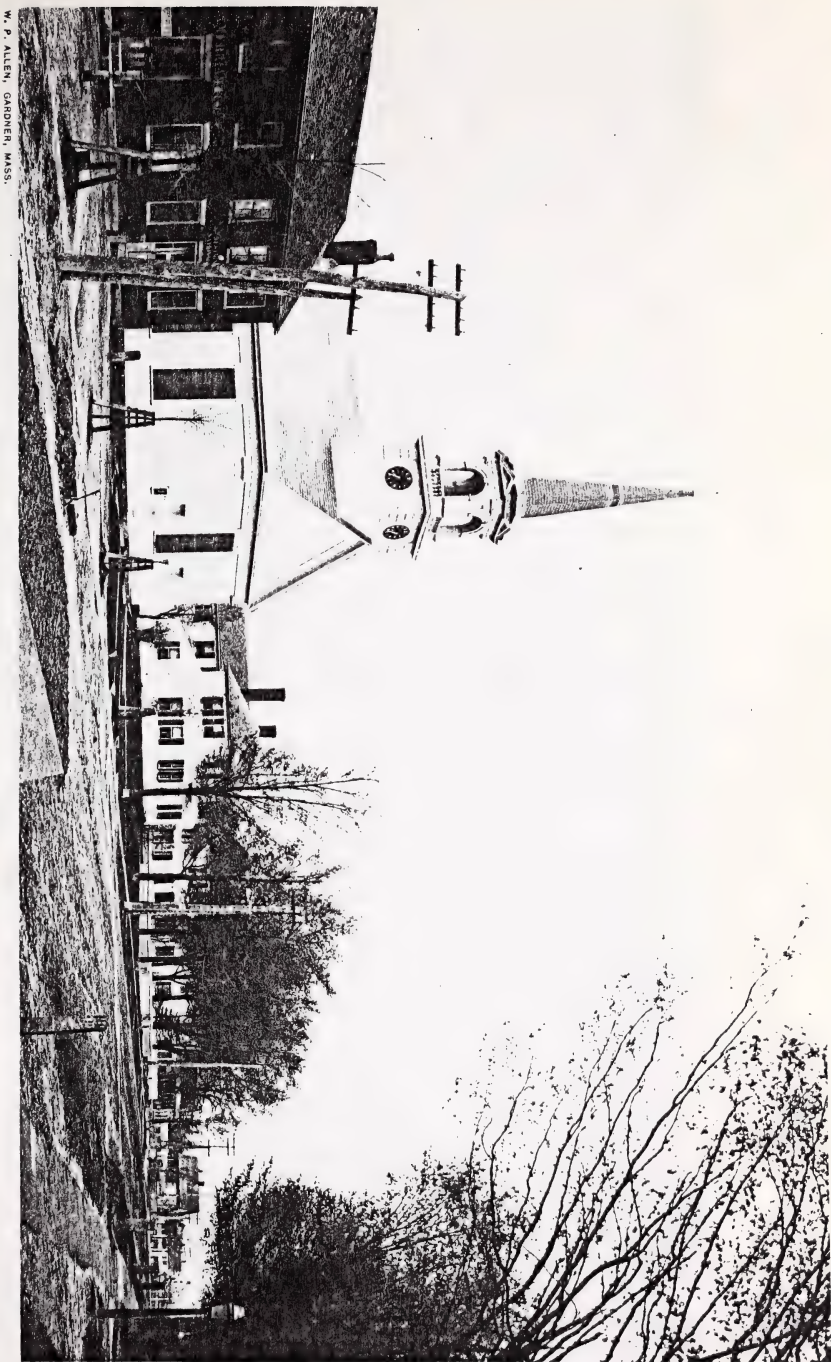




CENTRAL VILLAGE — LOOKING EAST.







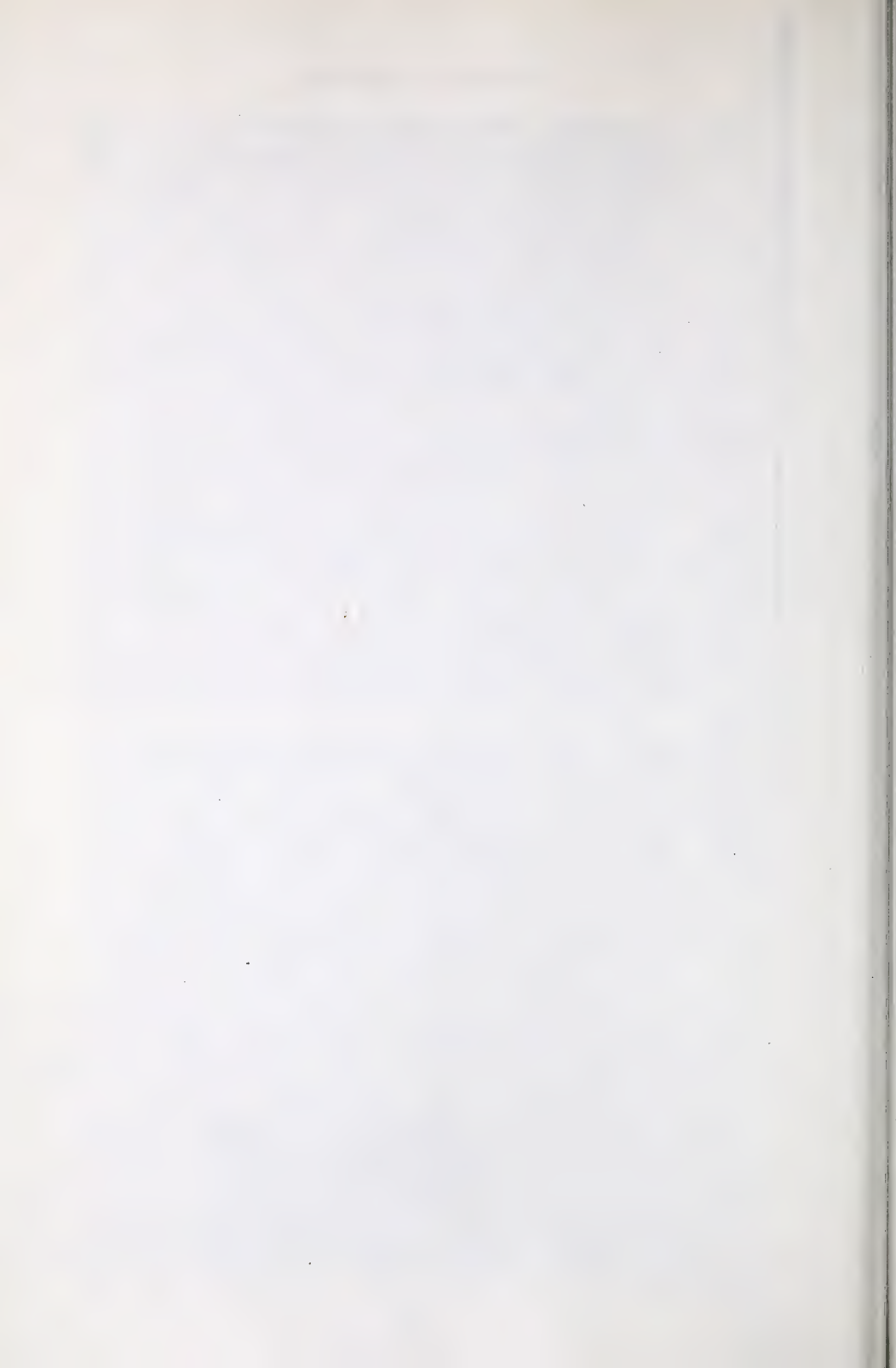
W. P. ALLEN, GARDNER, MASS.

NG WEST.



dencies, and effects. The winters are usually long and severe, and are subject to high winds and heavy storms, especially from the northeast, which are not only detrimental to many forms of vegetable life, but promotive of certain types of disease to which human beings are susceptible. At the same time, the natural conditions and circumstances which subject the place to many of the harsher and less welcome moods of the winter time, have their compensation in the fresh, cool breezes of the summer season, which moderate the otherwise excessive heat, and render that portion of the year more invigorating and delightful. Its lofty and exposed position imparts at all times not only purity and salubrity to the air, but constant and rapid movement to the waters; both of which facts conduce to vigor and strength of body, to activity and clearness of intellect, and, indirectly, to moral soundness and energy of character. On the whole, the town must be regarded an unusually healthful one, as the mortuary records of the population abundantly attest. Cases of pulmonary, malarial, or zymotic disease are of rare occurrence among the native-born population, and the number of persons attaining "good old age" is exceptionally large. The meteorological condition of the climate may be judged by the statement that the average annual rainfall in the general section of country to which the town belongs is forty-two inches, while the average temperature in the winter months is  $22\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit; in the summer  $65^{\circ}$ , and for the year about  $44\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ .

**Surface.** The territory of Westminster, when considered with reference to its superficies or external conformation, is greatly diversified. Considerably broken and wild in some localities, in others it is gently undulating, or level and plain-like. Between its lowest and highest points of altitude above the level of the sea, as shown hereafter, there is spread out an almost unlimited variety of those phases and exhibitions of rural perspective which contribute so largely to the beauty and charm of a landscape, arresting the attention and gratifying the taste of the lover of the works and wonders of Providence in the material world. Hill and dale, meadow and upland, forest and field, lake, river, and streamlet, blend together in one continuous display of scenic loveliness and enchantment. Delightful drives in all directions solicit the pleasure seeker and admirer of nature, and few towns in this vicinity or elsewhere can offer more or richer attractions to such than can here be enjoyed. Sylvan shades and sunny slopes, wilderness depths and commanding heights, glide into each other in rapid succession, as one journeys about, like the dissolving views of some grand, skilfully-manipulated panorama. From most of the eminences of the town the surrounding country presents an unusual variety of pleasing scenes, some of which are most picturesque and exquisitely lovely. Even the rough and

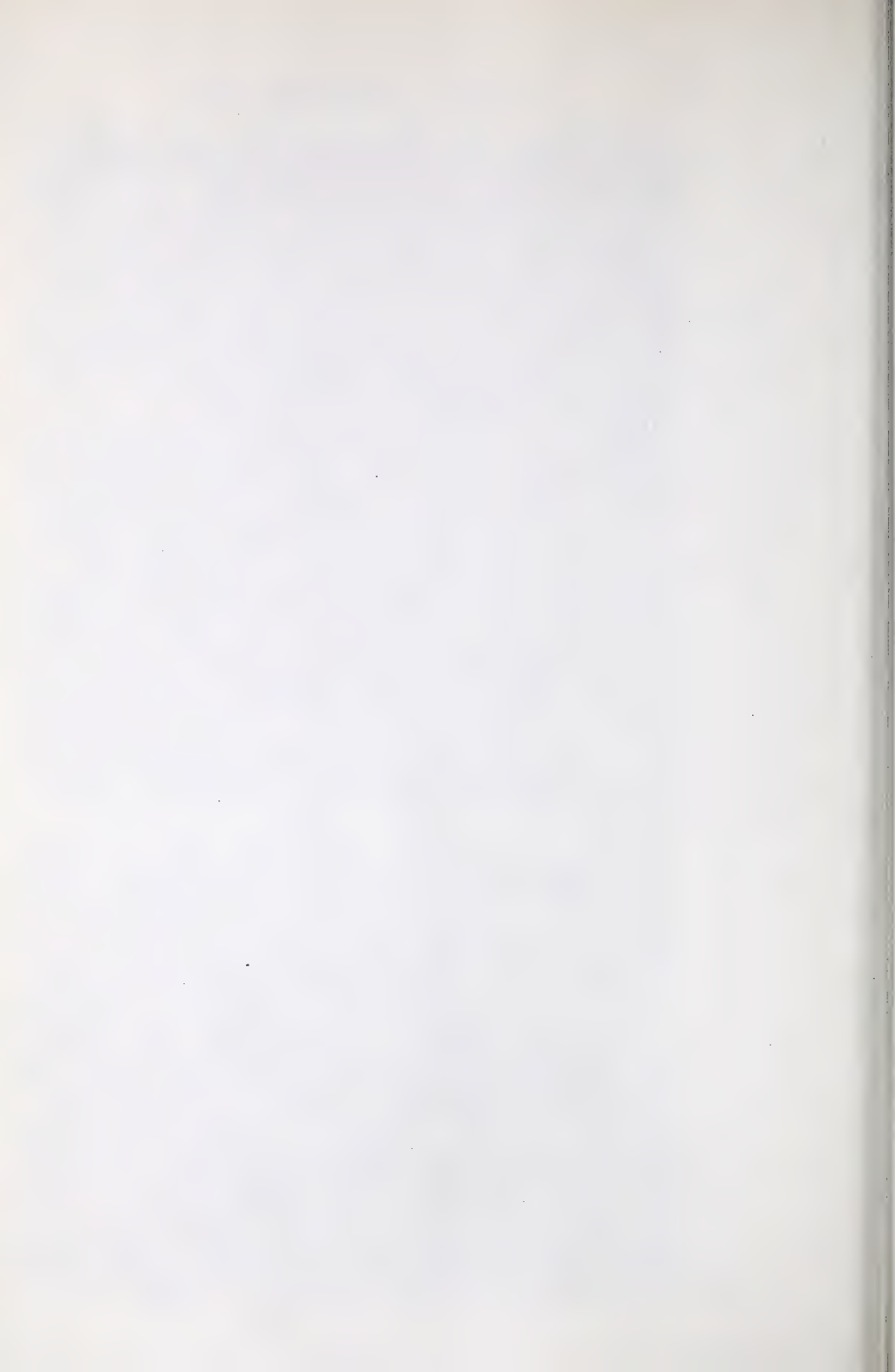


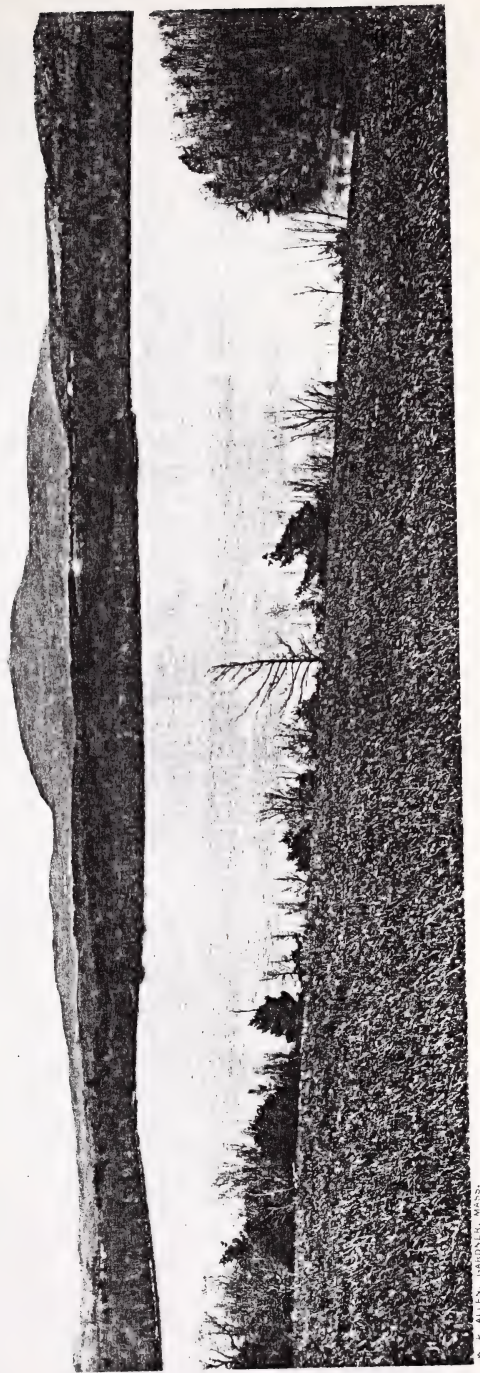


broken sections,—the rocky, barren hills, give a rustic, wild aspect or setting to the picture, and, by contrast, if not otherwise, add to it special interest and fascination. The graceful form of "Old Wachusett," rising at the southeast to an altitude of more than two thousand feet, partly within the town's limits, discernible from every prominent point of observation, lends wondrous grandeur and majesty to the view in that direction, while opposite, still farther away to the northwest, stands Monadnock, of nearly twice the height and more kingly mein, whose "bald and awful" brow, half revealed and half concealed amidst the clouds and vapors that often envelop it, bounds there the remotest reach of the beholder's eye.

**Hills.** As has already been suggested, the natural scenery of Westminster is characterized by numerous elevations of considerable altitude, some of the more important of which are worthy of special mention. Several of them are precipitous and steep—uncouth ridges of rock, lifted from their native bed by some convulsive force of nature in some unknown period of past ages, with scarce earth enough upon them and accompanying nutritive properties to give root and sustenance to the most stunted shrub or impoverished herbage,—sometimes not enough to hide their rough, hard faces from view; while others, the larger number perhaps, more gentle in their ascent and better favored with a soil susceptible of cultivation, are covered with vegetable growths of a various sort, furnishing sites for some of the best farms in all the region round about. Most of these eminences are designated by names of ancient date, given them in some instances for reasons that are apparent or easily inferred; in others, for reasons that are doubtful or unknown.

Directly to the southeast of the Center, within the borders of the village, stands what has always been known as "Meeting-house Hill." Upon its summit, at the northerly side of an open, level area, originally laid out for a training-field and other public uses, and familiarly called "the Common," or in later years "the Old Common," stood the first house of worship erected in the town, whence came, of course, the name by which it has always been designated. A mile north of the Center is the commanding eminence, crowned with the well-known Winship dwelling-house and farm buildings, which has obtained the very appropriate appellation of Prospect Hill, the view from it being more extensive, varied, and beautiful perhaps than from any other point in town. Farther on in the same direction and double the distance from the central village, near to Gardner line, is Beech Hill, called so from the largely prevailing kind of wood native to the locality. More northeasterly, three miles from the Center, and reaching to the boundary of Ashburnham, is Bragg Hill, the easterly and bolder extremity of which, near to Fitchburg, is called Bean Porridge Hill. The origin of these





MEETING-HOUSE POND AND WACHUSETT MOUNTAIN.

W. P. ALLEN, MAUDSLY, MASS.





designations may be easily suspected, but can not be positively affirmed. A bleak, rocky, barren ridge in the southerly portion of the town, the highest isolated point of land within its limits is Graves' Hill, which derived its name from a former owner, one of the early settlers, who had his dwelling on the westerly side of it, not far away. A still more precipitous and desolate elevation, a mile east of the last and three miles from the Center, one side of which is a perpendicular face of rock nearly a hundred feet high, is called Crow Hill, for reasons sufficiently obvious to those acquainted with the place and its belongings. Still farther in the same direction, and quite at the southeast corner of the territory, is Ball's Hill, which probably perpetuates the name of some former owner or neighboring resident. There are other lesser elevations scattered over the territory, such as Barnard Hill, Miles' Hill, Mt. Hunger, etc., but they are not of sufficient importance, nor widely enough known, to be definitely mentioned and located in this connection.

**Ponds.** There are four natural bodies of water in Westminster, to which, in making a catalogue under the present topographical head, must be added several artificial ones of considerable size, importance, and permanency, constructed in aid of manufacturing interests in this and neighboring towns. The most prominent of the former is what has usually been called Meeting-house Pond, though sometimes, in recent years, Westminster Pond, or Lake. It lies to the southeast of the Center, beyond and partly at the base of Meeting-house Hill, whence its earlier and most common name; its northernmost borders coming within a radius of half a mile from the town hall. Its extreme length is about a mile and its greatest width less than a hundred rods, its estimated area being 152.3 acres. Its waters are clear and unusually pure, being derived mostly from springs within its own depths or on the circumjacent hillsides, rendering them eminently suitable for domestic uses, should they ever be needed in some possible growth of the town hereafter. It is a beautiful sheet of water and adds greatly to the charm of the landscape, especially when viewed from the Old Common, with the quiet village of South Westminster on the right, the green fields and farm buildings in the distance on the left, while the rising slopes and rugged hills beyond are surmounted by Wachusett, lifting its head grandly towards the sky. It is a source of power for numerous manufacturing establishments located upon the banks of the stream through which its contents take their way to the sea.

Wachusett Pond, or Lake, is a body of water containing 134.15 acres, with more picturesque environments, situated two miles farther to the southeast, at the very foot of the mountain whose name it bears. It is partly in Princeton, but mostly in Westminster. Its northern and western borders have, at a recent date, become the seat of several summer dwellings,





private and public, to one of the latter of which are attached ample and attractive grounds, mostly in the adjacent grove, laid out and fitted up as a resort for pleasure parties and temporary visitors in the heated season of the year. This body of water also is a source of supply for mill privileges below.

Mud Pond is a small, unimportant body of water in the northerly section of the town, and Grassy Pond, a similar one in the easterly, two miles from the central village. Some years since, the latter became a part of the reservoir which was created in order to retain the surplus flowage of the springtime, for use during the later and drier months of the year by the mills of Wachusettville and other manufactories farther down the stream. This reservoir covers a tract of meadow land, some two hundred and fifty-five acres in extent, reaching from the village named to the outlet of Wachusett Lake, whose contents, in connection with those of Westminster Pond, are its chief source of supply. The influx is sufficient to make it of decided utility in the way indicated during the summer and autumn season, and from year to year indefinitely. The same is true in regard to what were formerly called the Town Meadows, three-fourths of a mile east of the Center, now used as a reservoir for the benefit of manufacturing interests located below. Two or three similar changes have been made in meadows near the Gardner line, in aid of the South Gardner industries. A few small mill ponds variously located are all that remain of the thirty-five or forty that existed sixty or seventy years ago. The reduction of lumber acreage in the vicinity and the tendency to concentration exhibited in all mechanical activities, here as elsewhere, have contributed to bring about the indicated change.

**Streams.** Numerous water courses, originating in the natural ponds of which mention has been made, and in adjoining towns, exist within the boundaries of Westminster. In the extreme north is Phillips' Brook, which gets its name from Col. Ivers Phillips, once an enterprising manufacturer of Fitchburg, who had extensive works upon the stream. It comes from Ashburnham, and after flowing nearly two miles in a southerly direction, passes into the city just referred to, where it soon after is known as the Nookagee River, an affluent of the Nashua. In the early records of the town this stream is often spoken of as "the most northerly river." In the same direction, at about half the distance from the Center, is Whitman's River, so called for reasons already indicated. It rises in Gardner, and passing through South Ashburnham, where it furnishes power to several manufactories, enters Westminster, whence, after a course of about three miles, it crosses the line of Fitchburg. This is the "North River" of the early inhabitants. A stream rises in what is called Cedar Swamp, two miles southwest of the Center, and running northerly and easterly a little north of the



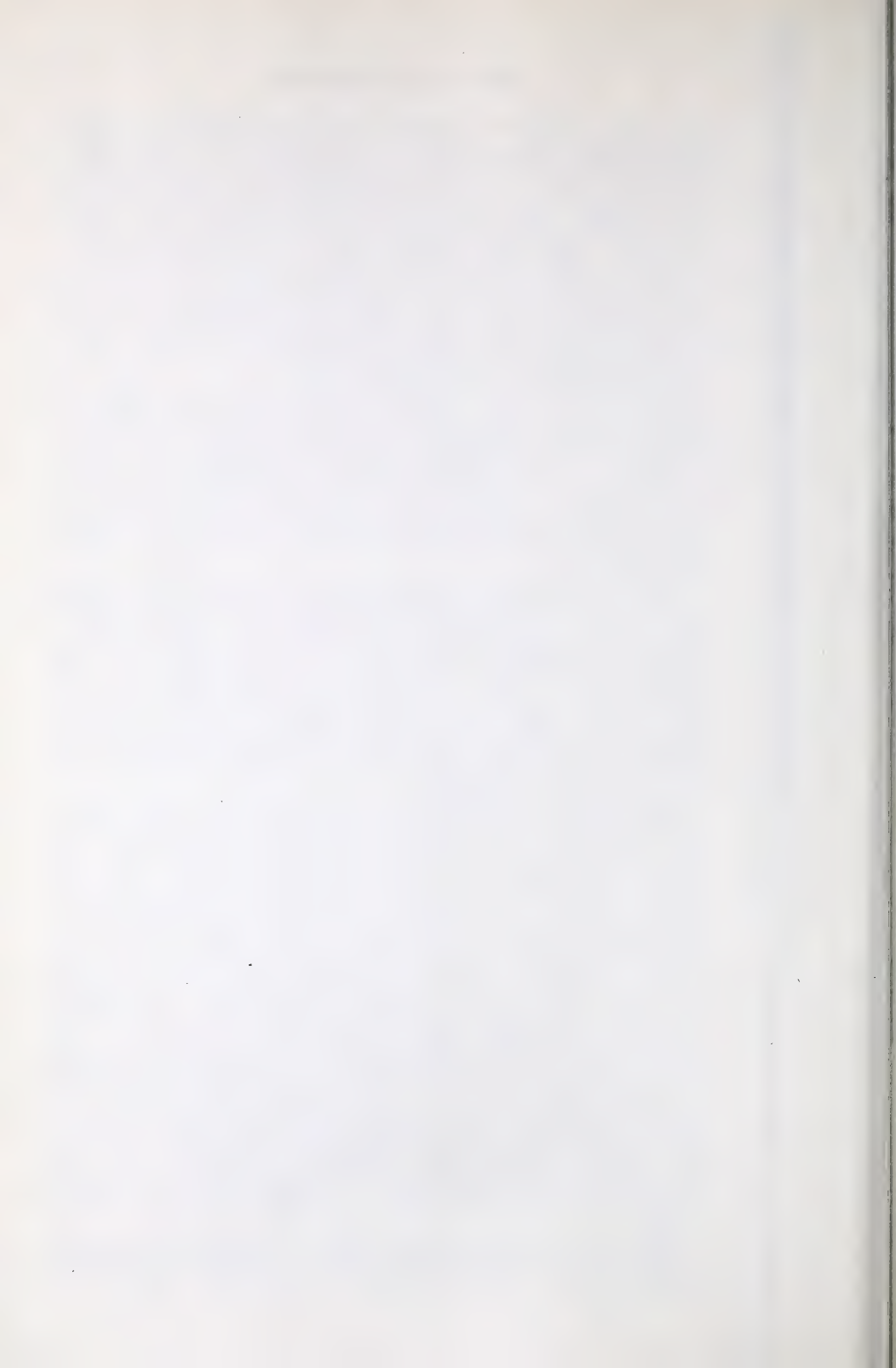
main village, finds its way into the town meadow reservoir already named, whence it flows a mile farther and unites with Whitman's River, below the railroad station. An interesting fact in regard to this stream is that, after passing the immediate vicinity of the village, it is divided by nature into two nearly equal parts, which come together again in the reservoir, three-fourths of a mile below, thus forming an island of about one hundred acres in extent, rising by gentle slopes on every side to an altitude of some one hundred and twenty-five or one hundred and fifty feet above the circumjacent valley, and forming a prominent feature of the landscape.

The Westminster and Wachusett Ponds both have outlets of considerable size, the waters of which unite in the Wachusettville reservoir and flow thence eastward beyond the town boundaries. All the streams thus far mentioned, with others from outside, come together in Fitchburg and combine to form the north branch of the Nashua River, the chief tributary of the Merrimac, through whose channel their waters at length reach the sea.

A brook in the westerly part of the town, having its source also in Cedar Swamp, after being intercepted by several reservoirs, passes into Gardner and empties into Otter River, a branch of the Miller's River, whose contents enter the Connecticut at Greenfield. Three or four small streams in the southerly part, taking their way into Hubbardston, become feeders of the Ware River and through that of the Chicopee, emptying at length into the Connecticut, near Springfield. The waters of all these last-named streams finally reach the ocean through Long Island Sound.

**Lowlands.** At the time of the settlement of Westminster and for many years afterward, the lowlands, swamps, and meadows were deemed of special value and were made the subject of special rules in the assignment of them to the original proprietors. They were not included in the division of the territory into farm or other lots, except they were of very limited extent, but were surveyed and laid out by a separate plan and in such a way as to equalize them in the final apportionment, as will appear in proper place and time. They measured in the aggregate about six hundred acres, giving to the proprietors about five acres each. Some of the more important of them were located in that part of the territory subsequently set off to Gardner. Of this class were those lying along the banks of Otter River and streams flowing into it, in the southwest section of that town, and Spectacle Meadow, located below the present mills of Thomas Greenwood and of Lewis A. Wright & Co., at the eastern extremity of South Gardner village.

Within the borders of the town, as it now is, were the following, to wit:—The Town Meadow, sometimes designated as





the Great Meadow, situated east of Meeting-house Hill, now covered by the reservoir of Caleb S. Merriam; Brattle or Long Meadow, which lay above the first (Narrows) sawmill, its lower portion having been given to William Brattle of Cambridge, in consideration of his erecting said mill; Mare Meadow, so-called as early as 1741, from the fact, it is said, that Joseph Hosley's mare was mired there, located in the southerly part of the territory, near the recently constructed road to Hubbardston; Beech Hill Meadow, lying at the foot of the eminence bearing that name, on the southerly side; Pond Meadow, on the borders of Muddy Pond; and Hoar's Meadow of eighteen acres, not definitely located, but supposed to be a part of Tophet Swamp, west of the central village. There were other meadows having no specific name, being indicated in the records in a general way, as, for instance, one "that lieth on the easterly side of a Pond east of the sawmill" (Grassy Pond); one "that lieth upon the stream that runneth through Mare Meadow"; one "in the north part of the town," probably on Whitman's River, near Ashburnham line; one "lying upon Lunenburg line, on a brook that runneth through the Great Meadow," that is, south-east of the railroad station, etc.

Cedar Swamp is in the southwesterly part of the town and is noted for the abundant growth of the kind of wood whose name it bears. The cedar was possessed of qualities which gave the land producing it pre-eminent value in the olden time, and this swamp, for that reason, was reserved in the general division and distribution of the territory, and afterward sold for the common benefit of the whole body of proprietors. An unusual and interesting natural fact connected with this swamp is, that it has three distinct outlets flowing in three different directions, north, south, and west, which constitute the head-waters of branches of three important rivers of the state—the Nashua, Miller's, and Chicopee rivers.

Though the lowlands enumerated above were deemed so valuable at the outset as sources of food-supply for the horses and cattle of the early settlers, thereby being a strong inducement for those looking for a home in the wilderness to locate in the vicinity of them, and though they served an excellent purpose in that particular for the greater part of a century, yet have they greatly deteriorated in later years, and in many instances are regarded as of little worth, the nutritious grasses which formerly gave them value having in good part or wholly disappeared. Whether or not they will ever be re-habilitated and made profitable to the husbandman or horticulturist, is a problem for the future to solve.

**Elevations.** It is not known that any careful and *trustworthy* topographical survey of the town's territory has ever been made. Recently, however, a commission, authorized by the United States government, has been over the ground in a



certain (or uncertain) way, and the result of its labors given to the public in a series of charts upon which a few computations have been based. Those charts assume the correctness of the figures representing the height of the railroad track above sea level, as furnished by the engineer of the Vermont & Massachusetts corporation, but as they do not indicate measurements of less than twenty feet in extent, smaller distances being estimated by the writer from a limited personal knowledge of the several points mentioned, respectively, it is obvious that quite an element of uncertainty must enter into the problem involved. Nevertheless, the enumerations presented, though not mathematically, but only approximately, correct, may be considered sufficiently so for purposes of general information and for all the practical uses of life. With these explanations the following table is submitted to the interested reader:

<i>Designated Localities.</i>	<i>Altitude.</i>
Town line, where it crosses Wachusett mountain . . .	1400 feet.
Graves' Hill, the highest isolated point . . . . .	1325 "
Beach Hill, at the rear of Amasa Lovewell's . . . . .	1165 "
Prospect Hill, above Winship buildings . . . . .	1150 "
Bean Porridge Hill . . . . .	1130 "
Old Common, at the site of old Meeting-house . . . . .	1120 "
Ball Hill . . . . .	1125 "
South Westminster, foundation of factory . . . . .	1060 "
Town Hall building . . . . .	1060 "
Meeting-house Pond . . . . .	1000 "
Muddy Pond . . . . .	950 "
Town Meadow . . . . .	900 "
Wachusett Lake . . . . .	870 "
Wachusettville Reservoir (full) . . . . .	870 "
Whitman's Village, in front of old hotel . . . . .	800 "
Railroad station . . . . .	726 "
Whitman's River, at Fitchburg line . . . . .	655 "

**Local Names.** There are numerous localities within the limits of Westminster which have been designated during longer or shorter periods of its history by special names more or less familiar to its inhabitants and to many residing elsewhere. Some of those names have been already mentioned and the points or sections of territory to which they refer have been sufficiently indicated. But there are others frequently used and likely to appear on subsequent pages of this volume, which it seems desirable and important to specify and to apply in a definite way to the places and situations where they respectively belong. For the convenience of the reader, they are presented in a somewhat tabulated form.

"The Common," or "The Old Common," has already been alluded to as the open area which crowns the summit of Meeting-house Hill. It originally comprised about six acres, but has been greatly reduced by sale and otherwise, until it is scarcely more than half that size at the present time.



"The North Common" designates the original site of the Universalist house of worship, together with the open lot upon which that structure fronted, situated a mile and a half north-east of the Center, opposite the schoolhouse of what was formerly District No. 9.

"Scrabble Hollow" is a compound term applied to the group of buildings located half a mile north of the last-named place, already spoken of as Whitman's Village.

"The Narrows" was the name first given to Wachusettville, and still frequently used, — suggested evidently by its peculiar situation between the river and the somewhat abrupt acclivities flanking it on the southerly side.

"Frog Hollow" was the rustic title once applied to what is now the active, flourishing village of South Westminster.

"Tophet," or "Tophet Swamp," designates a track of woody lowland situated half a mile west of the central village.

"Parker's Corner" was the point where the Princeton and Rutland roads divide, one and a half miles from the Center, near the residence of J. Hervey Miller — the lands and residence just above on the latter road, now owned by F. A. Taylor, being once occupied by Caleb Parker, an early settler in the town.

"Miles' Corner" was a similar point a mile farther on the Rutland road, above the dwelling of Mrs. Julia A. Foster. Two Miles families, one living where Mrs. Foster now does and the other on a farm adjoining, known as the Keyes place, made the name appropriate.

"The Turnpike" was the principal thoroughfare through the town for many years, coming from South Gardner and running to Leominster, as hereafter more fully described.

"The Street" is the main road through the Central village, and may be considered as extending from the schoolhouse in District No. 1 to the Nichols chair establishment, or perhaps as far as the parting of the ways, beyond.

"Bacon Street" runs at right angles with the last, from a point nearly opposite the Universalist church, northward for half a mile or more.

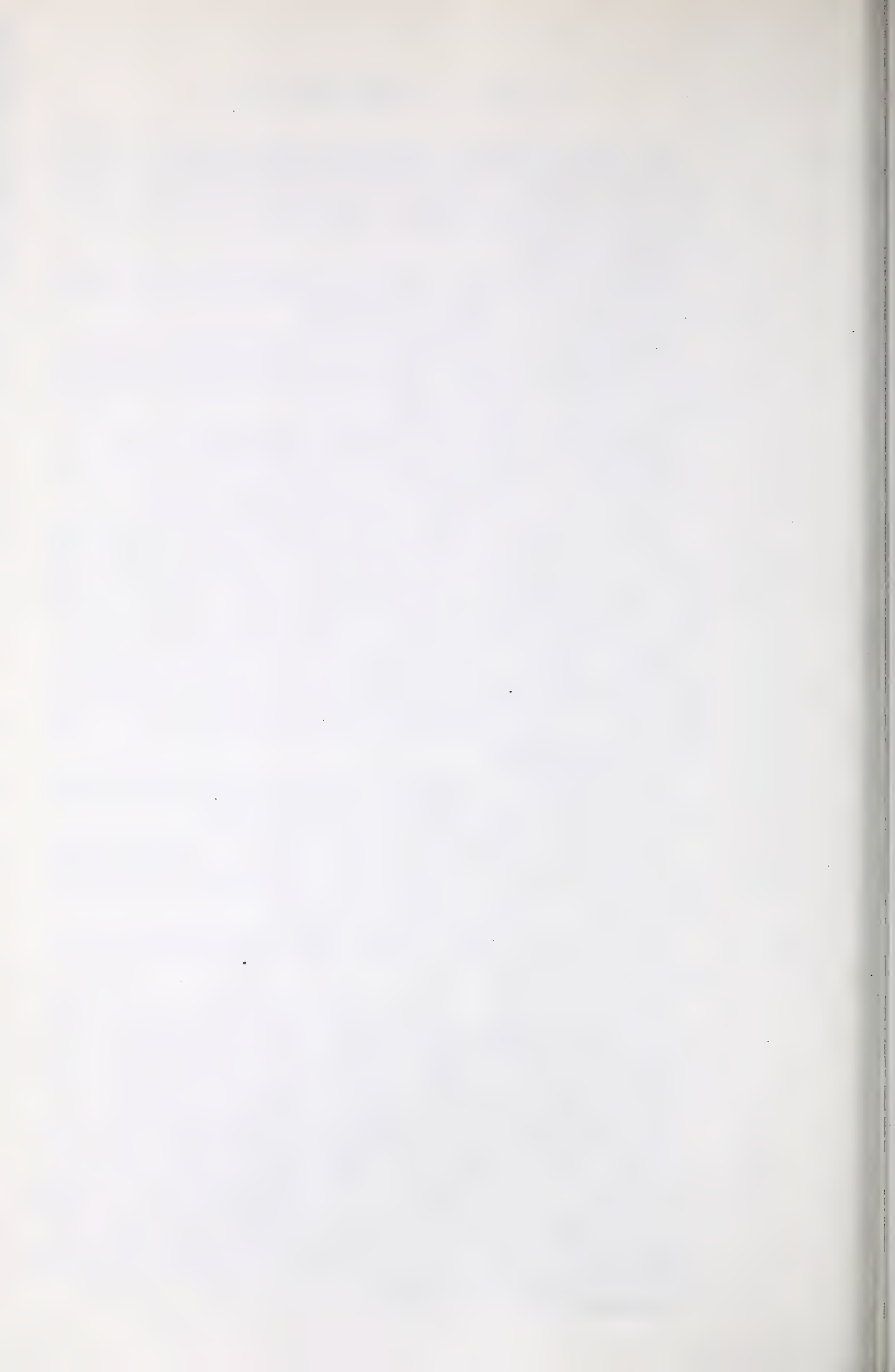
"Pleasant Street" is a short street running from the last-named, past the residence of Joseph Hager, parallel with Main Street, to the road leading to Leominster and Fitchburg.

"Eliot Street" is a public way connecting the same thoroughfares as the last, some twenty-five rods farther northward.

"Hopkins Road" — the name formerly given, as found in the records, to Bacon Street and its extension towards Beech Hill. Its origin and the reason of its use have not been ascertained.

"No-town," a considerable tract of unincorporated land, formerly lying between Fitchburg, Leominster, Princeton, and Westminster. By an act of the legislature, passed April 10, 1838, it was divided into three parts and annexed to the three last-named towns, respectively.





## CHAPTER II.

### NATURAL RESOURCES AND PRODUCTIONS.

STRUCTURAL FORMATION—CHARACTER OF SOIL—FLORA AND FAUNA  
—INDIAN OCCUPATION.

**Geology.** No detailed and critical examination of the geological characteristics of the town of Westminster, by an experienced scientist, has ever been made, so far as ascertained, and therefore only a few general statements pertaining to this department of the work in hand can be presented in these pages. The underlying basis of the soil, according to Edward Hitchcock, D. D., the former learned geologist of the State of Massachusetts, is what may be termed *ferruginous gneiss*, a metamorphic or fire-produced formation, constituting, if not the primary or earliest rock resulting from the cooling of the original molten mass of the substance of the earth, yet the lowest accessible portion of the earth's crust. Gneiss is a kind of granite, being composed of the same essential elements,—quartz, feldspar, and mica, with an occasional blending of other ingredients. In granite, these elements are mixed promiscuously together, forming one compact mass. In gneiss, they are arranged in layers, more or less definitely marked, rendering it difficult, sometimes, to distinguish between the two. Quartz is composed of silicon, the main constituent of pure sand, and oxygen, while feldspar has silica for a base, combined with alumina, the chief ingredient of clay, and potash. Mica is a mineral better known by the common name of *isinglass*, and can be easily detected by its shining properties in most of the broken stone of the vicinity. Into this gneiss or stratified granite there is introduced an infusion or admixture of iron, giving it a more or less rusty appearance, and making it highly susceptible to oxidation and consequent decomposition,—a dissolving process plainly discernible where the primal rock is exposed to the atmosphere for a lengthy period. In some parts of the town the rock assumes a slaty form, producing what is denominated Merrimac schist, from its prevalence in the valley of the Merrimac River. In other localities, a kind of rock termed greenstone, from its usual color, appears—a variety of trap rock, in which hornblende and feldspar preponderate.

This gneissic base or substratum, though occasionally brought to view in ledges and crag-like eminences, as at Graves' Hill and Crow Hill, and also in excavations, is for the most part far



below the surface, furnishing a bed for a heterogeneous mass of various and multiform substances, often denominated, in a general, unscientific way, earth or soil. Portions of this mass, especially the aluminous deposits found and utilized in divers sections of the town, belong to what are termed the secondary and tertiary periods of geologic development, but most of it must be ascribed to the later or "drift" age of the building of the world. A certain percentage of the latter is, no doubt, native to the locality, its existence being due to agencies and causes operating *in situ*, or wherever it is found; but the greater part is foreign, having been brought here by some of those mighty movements of a glacial character, which, in long-gone ages, swept over the continent, changing the face of outward nature, and determining not only the physical characteristics of the earth's surface for all coming time, but the fortunes of many generations of the then unborn children of men. The great body of sand, gravel, pebble stones, and coarser earthy matter of this whole region, is to be attributed to this source, as is also most of the broken rock so widely prevailing. Moreover, the boulders, often of great size, scattered here and there indiscriminately, sometimes lying entirely above the surface of the ground, and sometimes partly or wholly beneath it, having no kinship to the native rock, belong also to what is denominated "drift," and were brought, by the agencies indicated, from far away — from New Hampshire or Vermont, or perhaps even more distant places, where they were originally produced.

Commingling with these different kinds of coarser deposit, and sometimes covering them entirely, are there finer ingredients, also transported hither by vast water currents or rivers of a later date, moving southward and bearing them in the form of sediment of decomposed mineral and other matter, to be deposited just as the overflowings of the Connecticut River at this day deposit fertilizing material upon the meadows they hide from human sight. Little of this sediment or alluvium, as it is technically called, is found in Westminster, except on some of the intervalles or meadow bottoms in the easterly sections of its territory. Added to these drift and alluvial deposits, wherever they exist, are there other constituents of the soil, arising, as suggested above, from the local disintegration of native or imported rock, and the direct decomposition of animal and vegetable matter, both of which processes have been going on for untold ages, here as elsewhere on the globe. In the several ways referred to, is derived that diversified aggregation of organic and inorganic substances of which the surface of the township is composed, and in which are represented those elementary principles, chemical and otherwise, that give it fertility and productiveness, and render it capable, under the influence of the meteorological conditions attending it, and with proper culture, of feeding the hunger of animal life, of assum-





ing numberless forms of beauty and attractiveness, and of ministering in manifold ways to the necessity, the comfort, and the happiness of all classes of people.

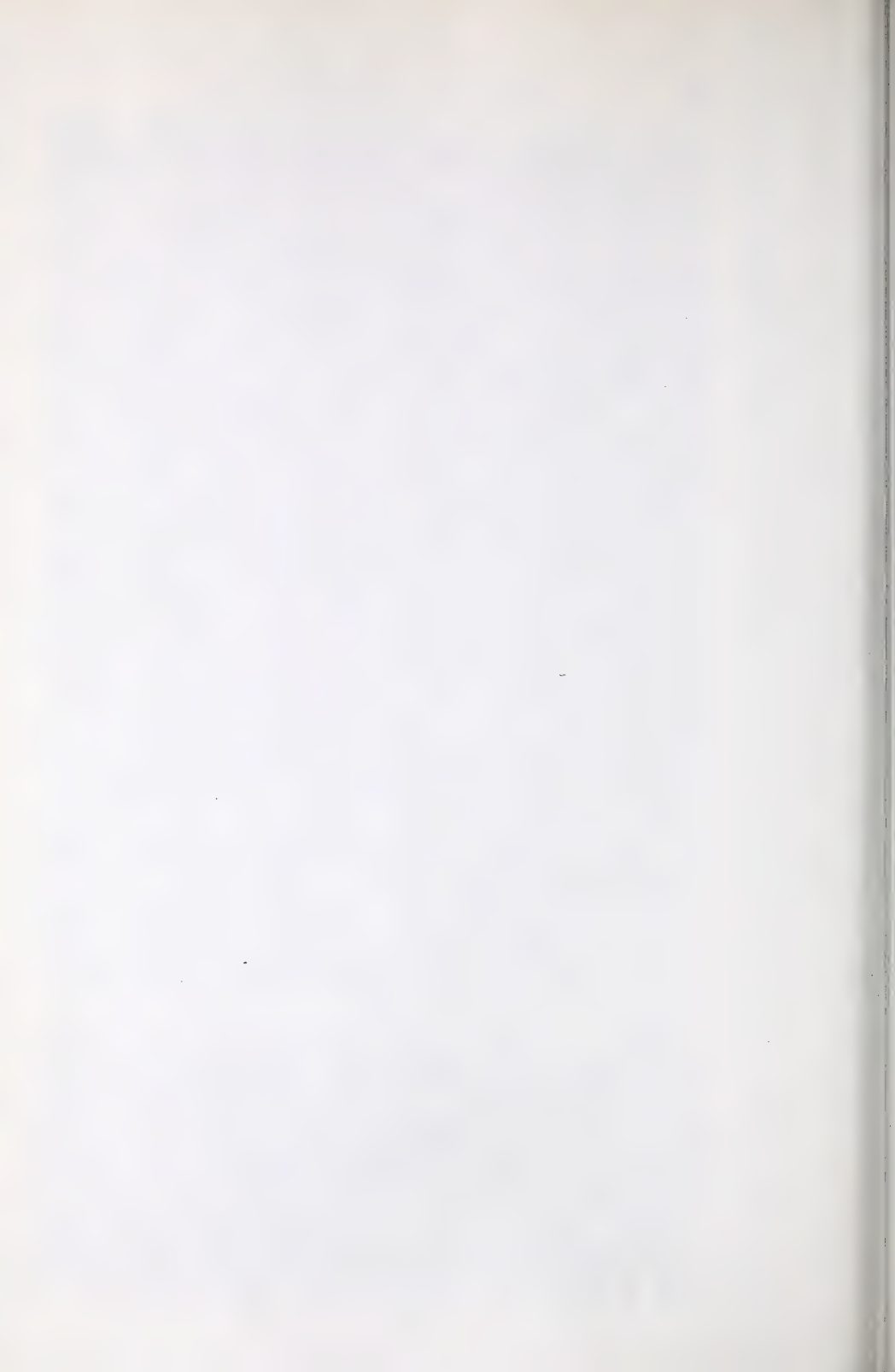
**The Soil.** According to the deductions and teachings of abstract science, as represented by some of the best students of nature, a soil which has a gneissic basis or substratum is not characterized by fertility, and hence not favorable to the purposes of agriculture. Practically, however, as Doctor Hitchcock states, such conclusions are not proved to be absolutely sound and trustworthy, since some of the most fruitful and profitable farms in Worcester County and elsewhere are of exactly this character. It is possible, as the same authority suggests, that the iron which enters into the composition of the rock in this region of country, is invested with properties conducive to vegetable growths, either of themselves or by combining with other elements with which they are brought in contact. Or, it may be, its power of oxidation enables it to set free more rapidly than would otherwise be the case, some of the constituents of the native rock or other formations, such as potash or phosphorous, which are so helpful in promoting the development of vegetable life. However this may be, it is very certain that Westminster, though ranked as an agricultural town, can not be regarded as particularly adapted to agricultural uses. The composition of its soil, as set forth, is not such as to render it susceptible of luxurious growths or of a high state of cultivation. And then, lying as the town does upon a ridge of hills, the land is constantly losing, by the force of winds and waters, some of those fertilizing elements liberated by the decomposition of animal and vegetable matter, while, for the same reason, it is exposed to those bleak and chilling blasts which tend to retard, and in some instances prevent altogether, the growth and ripening of what may be sown or planted there. Naturally, therefore, the town is better fitted for grazing purposes than for the cultivation of fruit and cereal crops. Furthermore, the elevated position of the place renders the season comparatively short, though there is a considerable difference between the easterly and westerly parts of the town in this as well as in other respects, — the advantage being very decidedly on the side of the former.

And yet, speaking in a general way, Westminster may be considered up to, if not above, the level of the average Massachusetts town, for the prosecution of the calling of the husbandman. The land responds readily to wise and faithful tillage, and there are a goodly number of farms which, by such tillage perseveringly followed for a series of years, have been made to yield satisfactory returns for the labor expended upon them. The farmhouses, barns, and outbuildings, as well as the general appearance of the fields, orchards, and gardens, bespeak, in many instances, an unusual degree of industry,



thrift, and material prosperity, and a more than average amount of real independence, solid comfort, and substantial happiness. In proof of what has been remarked concerning the adaptability of the soil to grazing purposes, it may be said that much attention has in recent years been paid to the production of milk for the home and general market, while the practice of special farming in the line of raising early vegetables and small fruits, for the supply of the demand existing among the artisans of the town and in the prosperous manufacturing centers readily accessible, seems to be growing in favor, and, no doubt, might be greatly increased. The tendency to centralization, everywhere manifest as a feature of modern life, and the general increase of mechanical industries, have resulted in the surrender and abandonment of numerous homesteads in the outer districts during the last half century, of which proper notice will be taken in due time and place. Unquestionably the multiplication of manufacturing establishments in the community at large, the superior inducements offered to the honest tiller of the soil by the virgin lands of the great West, and the very natural desire to earn a livelihood or make a fortune more rapidly and more easily than can be done upon a New England farm, have operated against the agricultural interests, here as well as in other parts of this section of the country, and caused the tilling of the soil to fall below what it otherwise might have been, as a source of the means of subsistence and of the essential outward blessings of life. In view of the changes alluded to, it is to be questioned, when all the factors in the problem are taken into account, and all the compensations of a New England yeoman's lot are estimated, whether more is not lost than gained to the individual, and to the community and country, by what has thus transpired. Among the most substantial, honored, trusted, and successful citizens of Westminster, during the entire period of its history, have been those who have lived upon and cultivated the soil, — their own broad acres responding to their daily toil with remunerative harvests year by year, enabling them to have and maintain that unsurpassed type of competence, comfort, and content, — *a New England farmer's home.*

**Flora.** Of the immense number of varieties of plant life distributed over the surface of the globe, only a few can be found within the limits of an ordinary Massachusetts township. The products of the soil native to Westminster are similar to those prevailing throughout the general section of country of which it forms a part. Tradition, confirmed by such testimony as is found in old letters and scraps of personal narrative or diaries, teaches that the territory when taken possession of by the first proprietors, with the exception of the meadow-lands, a few boggy, unfruitful swamps, and some bleak and ledgy hills, was covered with a dense growth of different kinds of wood





indigenous to this locality. It would seem that the chestnut predominated, with a liberal proportion of the several varieties of oak, maple, birch, pine, and ash, of hemlock, spruce, and hackmatack. The beech was common in some parts of the town, cedar grew in certain of the lowlands, and walnut or hickory graced the slopes of the Wachusett. Numerous smaller and less important kinds of trees, with the usual varieties of underbrush, were scattered through the forests, though it is understood that until a short period before the settlement, these were kept in check, if not essentially destroyed, by fires which the Indians were wont to set, from time to time, in order to render the locality more accessible and traversable as hunting grounds. The original growth of wood and timber was years ago entirely cut off, a few imposing specimens of which, especially in the shape of pine lots, are remembered by the older inhabitants, and the second or third, or perhaps the fourth, has taken its place, in which most, if not all, the original varieties are to a greater or less extent reproduced. No new species of forest trees have been introduced, though a few shade or ornamental ones have come in, to occupy and adorn the gardens or lawns of residents. During the past forty or fifty years, considerable tracts of land, previously cleared and devoted to grazing or tillage, on account of the abandonment of farms alluded to and for other reasons, have been allowed to grow up to wood, so that the acreage of forest is much greater to-day than formerly. As a result, there is now enough of this in town to supply all common needs, to give pleasing variety to the landscape, to impart salubrity to the air, to soften the fierceness of wintry blasts and break the violence of summer tempests, and to aid in keeping up the supply of nature's water fountains, to which woodlands so largely contribute.

The most common large shrubs indigenous hereabout are the alder, the elder, the sumac, the mountain laurel, the last three of which, in their season, add much to the beauty and charm of the outward world, by the delicacy and brilliancy of their foliage and flowers. The same may be said of the sheep-laurel, the wild rose, and the different classes of spirea, or hardhack, which grow in profusion. The principal smaller flowering plants, in the order of their blossoming, are the mayflower, the blue and white violet, the anemone, the dandelion, various kinds of asters, pond and spotted field lilies, lobelia, the cardinal flower, the gentian, St. John's wort, the golden rod, etc.

Wild grapes are found along the streams and in the woods of the easterly part of the town. The pastures and newly cleared lands are fruitful of various kinds of berries, — the blueberry preponderating, though the blackberry, the raspberry, the strawberry, and the checkerberry, exist in goodly proportion. In many instances, if not generally, these spontaneous products of the earth, deemed common property not many years since, and





free to all who might be pleased to gather them, wherever they were found, are now regarded as articles of individual ownership, subject to all the conditions of other items of personal estate, being oftentimes made, by sales at home or in the general market, sources of considerable income to those possessing the lands on which they grow. The same may be said of the different kinds of nuts which the native trees of the forest bear.

Orchards were set out by most of the first settlers, and their example has been followed by those coming after them to the present day. Of course the trees of which they were composed were an importation. Experience has proved that only the hardier kinds of larger fruit, like the apple and pear, find a soil and climate congenial to their growth and ripening, and even these require a sheltered location in order to insure satisfactory results. Small fruits are cultivated with some degree of success for domestic use and for the outside world.

A somewhat liberal supply of exotics, in the form of foliage and flowering shrubs and plants, has been brought into the gardens, conservatories, and dwellings of the people, whereby the realm of plant life here has been much enlarged, enriched, and beautified.

A goodly supply and variety of grasses, chiefly of foreign nativity, are grown upon the uplands of the town. For the most part, as an item of good husbandry, they are consumed upon the farms where they are produced, although there is sometimes a surplus for the general market. The usual swamp and meadow grasses are undoubtedly indigenous wherever they appear. The better kinds, fowl meadow, blue joint, and other unnamed varieties, were, in the early days, very nutritious and palatable, rendering the lands producing them of great value to the proprietors. But these have greatly degenerated or died out altogether, their place having been supplied by a growth of coarse, sour grass, rushes, brakes, briars, and small bushes of no use for cattle-fodder, or for any other known purpose whatsoever. As a consequence, the present meadow and swamp lands are small in extent and of little worth to the owner or the general public. In point of fact, such lands are largely abandoned or converted into reservoirs, as heretofore stated, in aid of manufacturing interests in this or neighboring towns.

**Fauna.** The territory of the present town of Westminster was, no doubt, the aboriginal abode of a considerable number of wild beasts, more or less savage, or was subject to the incursions of such from more rugged and mountainous regions outside its borders. Among these, the black and brown bear, the catamount, the lynx, and the wolf were conspicuous. The American elk, or moose, and deer were probably only occasional visitants. The wolf and the bear were abundant for some years after the settlement of the place, annoying the farmers by depredations upon their flocks and herds, and giving parents much



anxiety concerning their children when away from home or from some known shelter after nightfall, though those animals rarely, if ever, attacked a human being, except when provoked or pressed by unusual hunger. The howlings of the wolf, however, often made the night hideous, especially in the neighborhood of Wachusett, which seemed to have been a place of rendezvous for great numbers of them. Stories are told of their chasing frightened persons, of their prowling about the rude dwellings of the early settlers, and of their being repeatedly shot in close proximity thereto, as will be hereafter noted, but no record has been discovered or tradition received indicating that a single human life was ever destroyed here by these denizens of the wilderness. The catamount and lynx were more ferocious and blood-thirsty than the wolf or bear, but they were rare and shy, and no serious encounters with them have been made known.

The beaver abounded somewhat extensively in the waters of the place, and traces of his ingenious work, in the way of felling trees and building dams, have been seen by some of the older people now living. But all these long since disappeared. A single meadow perpetuates the name and memory of this interesting creature, whose abode was a marvel of instinctive design and skillful workmanship. The smaller and less formidable dwellers in the woods and out-of-the-way places—the fox, the raccoon, the woodchuck, the rabbit, the polecat, and various orders of squirrels, though greatly reduced in number, are yet still existent—some of them to the great vexation of the gardener and agriculturist. The chase, a common sport of half a century and more ago, is rarely indulged in at the present day, and a professional fox-hunter belongs to a virtually extinct race. The amphibious mink and muskrat still dwell in swampy places and along the borders of running brooks, but are not often seen or captured.

The common domestic animals are all of foreign extraction, not simply foreign to the locality but to the continent, though possibly some kinds of dogs may have an infusion of native American blood in their veins. The usual varieties came to the place with the early settlers, and have been duly preserved and permitted to share the fortunes of their descendants to the present day. But there have been great changes in regard to them, in some respects incident to the changed conditions of our entire New England life. The horse, noblest of all man's quadrupedal companions, maintains his aforesaid prestige and rank in numbers and importance, nay, fills a larger place than formerly in the equipment of the farm and in the extent and variety of offices in which he renders service to his owner and the public weal. The ox, on the other hand, has fallen into disrepute as a motive power in agricultural operations, and his numbers have greatly decreased in consequence thereof, very few of his kind being now owned or employed in any capacity





whatever. Sheep, so essential to the community in former times, have, for obvious reasons, almost wholly disappeared, while cows, for reasons equally obvious, more nearly hold their own. The accessibility of the great West, with its immense herds of cattle and of swine, has greatly diminished the importance and value of both, as sources of supply for the food-markets in this section of country, and the attention given them as products of the farm, has declined accordingly. Those pets and guardians of the household — the dog and the cat — still fill their accustomed place in domestic economy and at the fireside of the family, and are not likely to fall into disrespect or desuetude.

Of birds of prey, formerly quite numerous, the eagle, the fish-hawk, the hen-hawk, and different kinds of owls, but few are now to be seen. Crows and blackbirds, in plentiful numbers, still vex to a limited extent the corn and grainfields of the husbandman. Wild geese occasionally pause to rest their weary wings in the waters of the town, or are discerned in high air, pressing on their way between warmer and colder latitudes. Wild turkeys, numerous in the early days, furnishing a frequent and much coveted dish for the table of the first settlers as a compensation for frequently disturbing the quiet of the night with their unmusical gobblings and cacklings, are not remembered by the oldest inhabitant. Flocks of pigeons, once abundant, are but rarely seen nowadays, and but few partridges remain as food for the powder of the sportsman, or for the table. The smaller wild birds — the various kinds of thrushes and bobolink, filling the air with their indescribable melody, the robin, the lark, the blue-bird, the bright-hued Baltimore oriole, the cherry bird, the sparrow and the wren, the woodpecker, the catbird, and the blue jay, the goldfinch, the snow-bird, and the half-domestic swallow, — are still extant in goodly numbers, ready for the early worm, the rippened berry, or the scattered grain. The house martin, once a common and welcome summer visitor, is now little more than a memory. The night hawk, with its shrill, piercing shriek, and the whip-poor-will, ever repeating, with its *vox humana*, its own name, lest the world forget it, may still be heard almost any evening from May to August, as in days of yore. Most of these winged tenants of the grove and field are migratory, coming and going with the growing and waning year, though a few of them — the crow, the blue jay, and the snowbird — defiant of winter's cold, remain the twelve-month through, under perpetual title to the realm they occupy in these more northern latitudes.

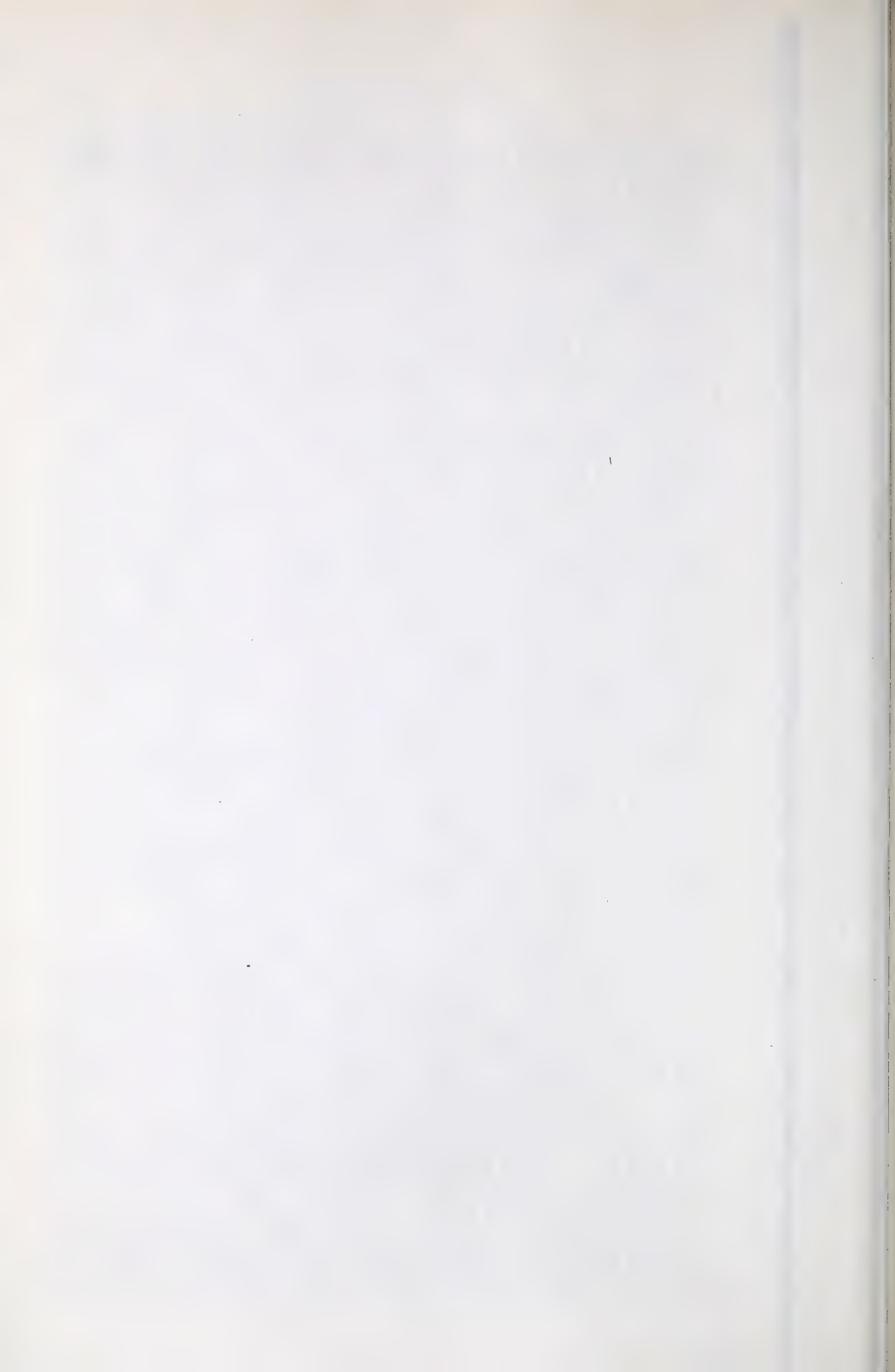
The domestic fowls are the same as may be found in any village or hamlet, in any town or borough of the state, perhaps of the country. Of those brought here with the pioneer settlers, only the hen seems to have come to stay. There are but few flocks of geese now, where once they cackled and chased



the small boy at almost every homestead, and few turkeys are raised either for the home or outside world, though fifty years ago many of the farmers made them an important part of their yearly production and a source of considerable income.

Numerous kinds of fish seem to have been indigenous to the waters of Westminster, and formed an important part of the food supply of the first comers to the place. The shy, beautiful, palatable trout frequented most of its smaller streams, while the black sucker, good for the table at given seasons of the year, was found in the larger ones. The ponds were well stocked with the highly prized pickerel, the perch, eel, and horned-pout, the last of which, scarcely deemed eatable by many people in by-gone days, has recently risen so much in popular favor that "pout dinners" are offered as a special attraction at lake shore resorts, being deemed a great delicacy by connoisseurs in matters of that sort. A few years ago, the experiment of introducing foreign varieties of fish into home waters, greatly vaunted by a certain class of amateur pisciculturists, was tried, by vote of the citizens, at an expense of several hundred dollars. The black bass was strongly recommended as a *gamely* creature and as excellent for the table, and it was put into Meeting-house Pond. The result is that the new comer has proved to be so gamely as either to destroy the natives, especially the pickerel and perch, or run the flesh off their bones by constantly harassing and chasing them through the waters, while they, themselves, are a poor substitute for what have been thus displaced or impoverished, being, except for a brief portion of the year, not simply unpalatable, as an article of food, but offensive to both smell and taste; so that the citizens would be quite willing to expend a much larger sum to rid the waters of the present imported occupants, than they did to introduce them there. It is wise, sometimes, to "let well enough alone," and not be in too great haste to adopt the theories of half-fledged novices and blatherskites.

Of the reptilian class, or order, of animated creation, but a few specimens have ever existed of any particular importance or note-worthiness. Certain kinds of water-snakes, and the spotted adder occasionally found here, have had a reputation for poisonous qualities probably beyond what the facts in the case would warrant, and have, therefore, been objects of special dread. The most formidable of the reptile tribes in town has been, no doubt, the black snake, once quite common, but now existing only in greatly diminished proportions, both as to numbers and size. They are reported as having sometimes chased children and timorous adults, much to their fright, but not, it is believed, to their harm. Striped and green snakes occasionally are seen, but excite little attention. Turtles are still, at times, discovered making their way through the waters, or sunning themselves upon a rock or log, or traveling across the





fields quite away from their native element. Lizards are not wholly extinct. The frog seems to hold his own with wonderful tenacity, as respects both numbers and power of vocalization, while the toad flourishes yet amid the haunts of civilized men, and though not agreeable to look upon is, nevertheless, a most interesting and useful creature, not estimated according to his deserts.

An indefinite number and variety of small, mischievous or noxious animals, like the mole, bat, mouse, and rat, infest all localities here as elsewhere, to the great annoyance and disgust of those coming in contact with them or with their doings, while the insect world is abundantly represented by different kinds of beetles and moths, wasps and bees, butterflies and glow-worms, the locust, grasshopper, and cricket, the whole vast fly tribe, and the singing, stinging mosquito, with other forms and types not needful to mention. These, with an innumerable company of bugs, worms, etc., known only to the entomologist, make up the list of insectivora found in these borders, and conclude what seems necessary to be said in regard to those denizens of the kingdom of animated nature which are represented in this general locality.

#### THE ABORIGINAL OCCUPANTS.

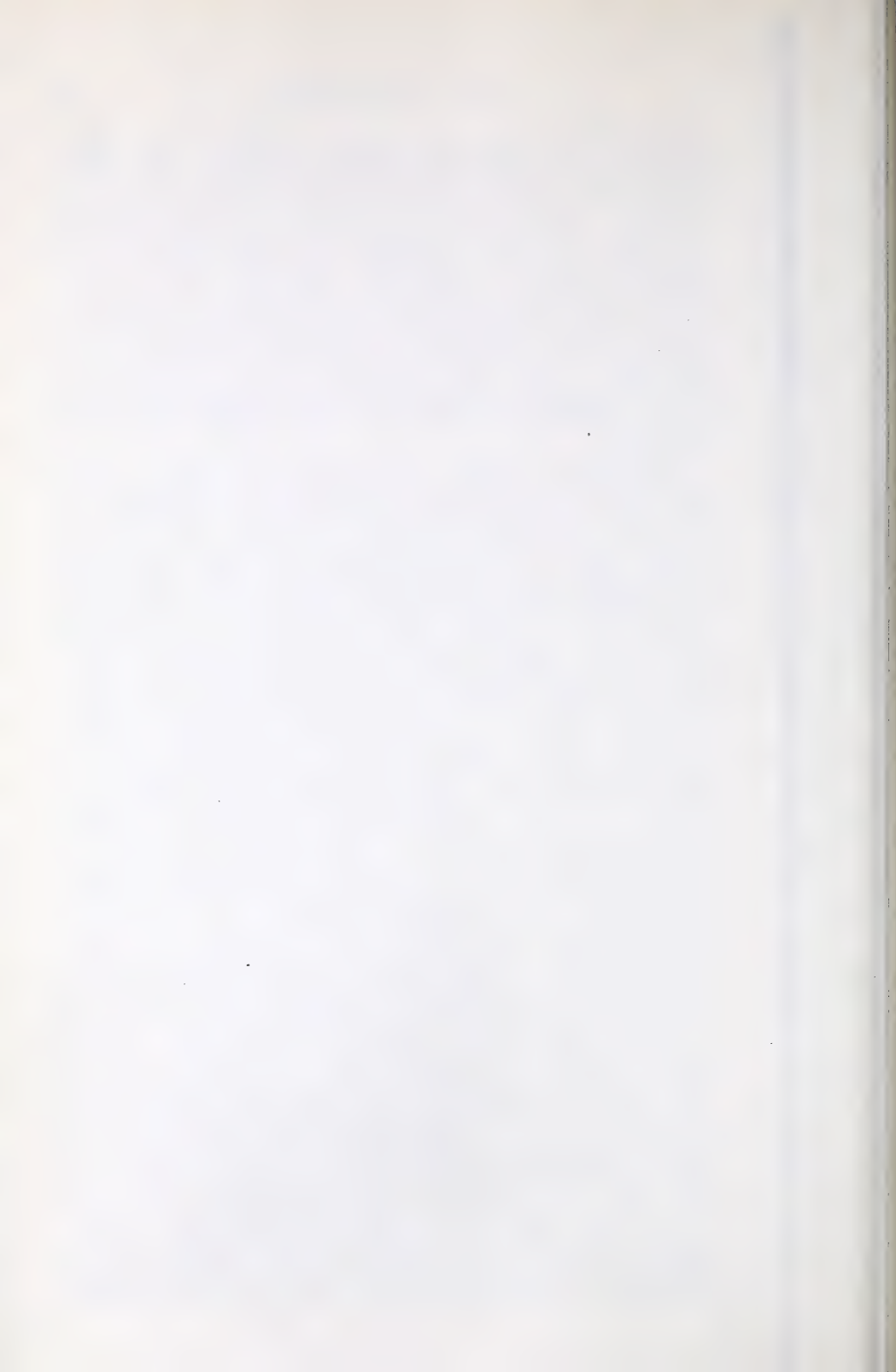
Having given an outline of what may be termed the physical geography of Westminster, it seems desirable, before entering upon the distinctively historical survey that now invites attention, to present a few considerations upon the relation of the aborigines of the country to the particular section of it involved in this work; the nature and extent of their ownership and occupancy of the land; the liquidation of their claims; and matters generally pertaining thereto. There is no probability that the Indians ever had any settlement or permanent abiding place on the territory of this town. No tokens of their existence have ever been found here, save an occasional peculiarly-shaped stone which might have been a rude axe or arrow-head, and which, if really such, was possibly lost or purposely left in casually crossing the place, or during some hunting excursion. Under these circumstances it is reasonable to conclude that the red men had nothing like what might be termed a residence within these borders. It is known, however, that different bands or tribes were located at several places in the general vicinity:—the Nashuas, at Washacum Pond, Sterling; the Hassanamiscos, at Grafton; the Quaboags, at Brookfield; the Squakeags, at Northfield, etc. These, like others in New England, had their respective seats or centers where they collectively dwelt during the greater part of the year, and around which they respectively claimed a certain extent of country as fishing and hunting grounds; their seat or center being always at localities near





which they could easily raise corn, peas, lentils, and such other vegetables as they were in the way of cultivating. Just where the boundaries of the several landed districts were in any case, or what was the division between the grounds of two contiguous tribes, does not appear, and probably never was absolutely fixed. Very likely these grounds shaded into each other, and were limited by a general understanding rather than by any established landmarks, and when any case of assumed trespass occurred,—one tribe taking fish or game on territory claimed by a neighbor,—it was settled, if not by mutual consultation and agreement, by the old arbitrament of savage warfare, very much as nominally civilized and Christian people have settled similar differences in this country and elsewhere from time immemorial.

It is furthermore known that the Nashuas, at Sterling, which was then a part of Lancaster, originally claimed Wachusett as within their jurisdiction, and that they were in the habit of flying to it and of taking advantage of its rocks and ravines, in escaping from, or repelling, the advances of their adversaries, when, pressed too hard, they were driven from their central dwelling-place. No doubt they also claimed the lands lying contiguous to Wachusett, and very likely those beyond, as far away as the headwaters of the river whose name they themselves bore, which would include the territory of the present town of Westminster. It is understood that when Sholan, chief of the Nashuas, went before Governor Winthrop and the representatives of the Massachusetts Colony, in 1633-4, and formally submitted to the authority of the English, according to the terms of a treaty or agreement still preserved at the State House, he granted to his acknowledged superiors the right to all the lands over which he had previously held sway, so far as ownership and settlement were concerned, reserving to himself and his people the privilege of remaining in their already established abodes, and of hunting and fishing at will upon those lands as formerly. The compensation or equivalent named for the interest thus conveyed was the pledged friendship of the recipients towards the tribe immediately concerned in the transaction, and protection against the invasion and slaughter of hostile tribes. In this legitimate and honorable way, the landed property of this town became, it would seem, at an early date, a part of the territorial possessions of the colony named, the Indians themselves recognizing the same. No other formal treaty, bargain, or transfer touching this particular section of country, between the red and white men, is known to have ever been made. Nor, indeed, was there ever any call or opportunity for any other. For what is known as King Philip's or the Narragansett War, inaugurated by the Indians themselves for the evident purpose of exterminating the white population, soon after broke out, resulting, contrary to the expectation of its insti-



gators, in the practical extinction of the whole red race from this section of the country. So that, subsequently to that tragic affair, there were no real or nominal aboriginal owners or claimants of the territory under notice. With the rest of southern New England, it remained virtually uninhabited and tenantless, so far as the natives were concerned, and consequently open and free to new occupants. The Massachusetts Colony, then permanently established at Boston and vicinity, having received certain general guaranties by the charter of Charles I, "to all lands extending from three miles north of Merrimac River to three miles south of Charles River, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans" (the king assuming jurisdiction by right of discovery), had taken possession, as far as practicable, of the entire region lying within those definitely stated limits; the section covered by the compact with Sholan, mentioned above, which was deemed supplementary or subordinate to the royal commission, included. Acting under authority thus obtained, and without any rival or contesting claimant, the government of that colony, or province, as it was subsequently called, in the exercise of its judicial and administrative functions, disposed of such portions of the country over which it had assumed control as was deemed wise and proper, either by sale to actual settlers or others having the desire and ability to purchase, or by grant to persons claiming consideration for services rendered or otherwise. Under this policy and by this latter method, the Westminster territory came into the possession of the original proprietors of the township. The circumstances and conditions of the transfer, with the preliminary and other action relating thereto, will be fully set forth in subsequent chapters of this work.





## CHAPTER III.

### EARLY NEW ENGLAND.

THE COLONISTS—ABORIGINAL TRIBES—RELATIONS OF THE TWO—  
KING PHILIP'S OR THE NARRAGANSETT WAR.

THE territory just referred to, whose characteristic features had previously been portrayed, in common with that of several other New England townships, was originally granted by the government of the province mentioned to the soldiers, or heirs and representatives of soldiers, who had rendered valuable service in what is known as King Philip's or the Narragansett War. And in order to a full presentation and clear understanding of all the factors entering into the problem of the ultimate possession and settlement of that territory, it is desirable, if not necessary, not only to give a condensed sketch of that brief but most sanguinary conflict, but also to go back to the very beginning of the colonization of these shores by civilized man; note the auspices under which the event took place; the relation of the new-comers to the aboriginal inhabitants; and the circumstances which led to the final outbreak between the two, in the early summer of 1675. To that complex task the opening paragraphs of the present chapter will be devoted.

**The Founding of New England.** Among the truly great achievements of the world's history, the founding of New England may be regarded as one of the most eventful and worthy of commemoration. Like a mighty monument erected upon the headlands of time, it stands out in bold relief against the background of past ages, to mark in its day the height gained by the rising tide of human progress and the opening of a new era in the life of the race. Whether considered with reference to the personality of the men and women by whose instrumentality it was brought to pass, or in its relation to the existence and happier fortunes of the American Republic, its importance and grandeur can not be over-estimated or too highly extolled. They, who, taking their lives in their hands and braving a multitude of perils, came across the sea, that they might set up in the wilds of the new world the ark of a loftier civilization than had ever been seen before, and plant in its virgin soil the tree of a larger liberty and of a broader faith than had previously existed anywhere upon the earth, were of no ordinary make, and they wrought no ordinary work. Whatever their faults, their follies, or their sins,—they no doubt had all of these,—they were persons of rare endowment, of wonderful



power, of pre-eminent nobility of soul. They belonged to that class of people in English society whom the brilliant and distinguished Lord Macaulay characterized as "the most remarkable, perhaps, the world ever produced." Raised by a sublime self-consecration above low and trifling aims and ends in life, above sordid, mercenary, selfish motives and ambitions, they illustrated a personal integrity, a loyalty to conscience, a devotion to principle, a faith in the eternal realities, and a moral heroism, which challenge the admiration, the homage, and the gratitude of mankind. Leaving home and friends and native land behind them, and all the blessings those terms imply in modern life, they dared the dangers of three thousand miles of tempestuous billows and all the privations and perils of an unknown wilderness peopled by wild beasts and savage men, not to gain wealth or power or any earthly good, but that they might secure for themselves and their posterity the inestimable blessings of civil and religious liberty, worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, and build up here a commonwealth or hierarchy fashioned after the hierarchy of the skies, — a kingdom of heaven on the earth. Great souls were they,

"bound to o'erleap the vulgar lot,  
And mold the world into the scheme of God."

What these founders *were*, showed itself in what they *did*. Like the image and superscription of Cæsar on the old Roman coin, their likeness was stamped on every product of their forming hand, — on New England life and history. Their character gave character to their work; in a large view, it shaped the fortunes of a mighty nation yet to be, — nay, of a continent. Their ideas of civil and religious liberty, crude and imperfect though they were in many respects, were yet the seed-grain and promise of those free institutions which make the American Republic the menace of despotic power in all lands, the hope of the oppressed the world over, and the joy of lovers of justice and humanity beneath every sky. All that is noblest and best in our American life, to-day, is the natural outcome of the principles and aims of those royal adventurers who settled Plymouth, Salem, and Boston, two hundred and sixty or seventy years ago. The Puritan element, personified in them more than any other, has shaped the best features and promoted the true greatness and glory of this, the latest born and foremost of the nations of the earth.

The founders of New England, no doubt, failed to comprehend the full meaning of what they were doing, and had little idea of what was to be the result of their labors in the centuries to come. "They builded better than they knew." Their work was a part of the plan of the eternal Providence, and, wrought under divine guidance, it could not be in vain.



**The Aborigines.** The number of native red men in New England at the time of the landing at Plymouth, has been estimated at 40,000, of which some 15,000 dwelt in what is now the state of Maine, the other 25,000 occupying, with varying density of population, most of the present territory of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, and also small sections of New Hampshire and Vermont. These were distributed in classes or tribes—more or less distinct from each other—and subordinate bands or families, each one having its own sachem or chief, and its own recognized ownership or control of lands, whose limitations and boundaries, as has been said, were more or less indefinite, variable, and uncertain.

In the southeast part of New Hampshire and northeast part of Massachusetts, scattered along the valley of the Merrimac River, were the Pawtuckets or Pennacooks, a comparatively large and important tribe, but of mild and peaceable disposition, the headquarters of whose chief sachem was at Concord, N. H. Southward of these, bordering upon the waters of Massachusetts Bay, and extending inland along the Charles River, were the Massachusetts, a strong and warlike tribe, holding several smaller tribes or bands in subjection, from whom the name of the colony and state was derived. Still farther to the south, claiming a sort of jurisdiction over most of what is now included in Bristol, Plymouth, and Barnstable counties, were the Pokanokets or Wampanoags, less wild and savage than neighboring tribes, their chief seat being at Pokanoket, on the borders of Narragansett Bay, and within the boundaries of the present town of Bristol, R. I. The Nausets of Cape Cod, and probably other small tribes, were subject to them. On the western slopes of the same bay, covering most of Rhode Island, were the Narragansetts. They were a high-spirited and haughty people, loving war and bloodshed, often seeking occasion for and provoking hostilities with their neighbors, especially with the Pequods, the most powerful and belligerent of all the tribes of southern New England, who occupied the valley of the Thames River, and claimed control of all eastern Connecticut, having their headquarters in what is now Groton, opposite New London. West of the Pequods were the Mohegans, in the southern part of Connecticut River valley, of gentle, peaceable spirit, engaging in war only in self-defense, and always friendly to the white man.

West and north of these several tribes were the Nipnet or Nipmuck Indians. The term Nipnet or Nipmuck means fresh water, and was applied in a general way to all those natives dwelling upon or near the inland lakes and streams of New England. They included the Nashuas at Lancaster, and the Quaboags at Brookfield, with their subordinate bands or families, and also the tribes or families of the valley of the Connecticut north of the Mohegan territory; the Agawams at





Springfield, the Woronokes at Westfield, the Nonotucks or Norwottucks at Northampton, the Pocomtucks at Deerfield, and the Squakeags at Northfield. There were no Indians in Berkshire County, except a subordinate branch of the Mohegans at Stockbridge called the Housatonics, and none to speak of in Vermont and the greater portion of New Hampshire. To the westward, however, at Albany and along the banks of the upper Hudson River and its tributaries, were the Maquas or Mohawks, one of the historic "Five Nations." "They were brave and ferocious, carrying on an exterminating war" with other tribes during most of the seventeenth century, and "destroying," says Judd, in his *History of Hadley*, "more Indians than have been destroyed by Europeans in war since they settled the country." "They made frequent inroads and attacks upon the New England tribes, usually with great slaughter." They belonged to that fiercest and most brutal of the native races of North America — the Iroquois, — while the New England tribes were Algonquins, who were of a milder and less sanguinary type of the aboriginal occupants of the continent.

Little time need be spent in delineating the distinguishing characteristics or ethnic peculiarities of the native American Indian. They are well known by intelligent people, or can be easily learned from sources accessible to every reader at the present day. Only a few hints concerning them will be given here.

In person, the Aborigines of New England were of good size, tall, erect, and well proportioned, with high cheek-bones, sunken and very dark eyes, long, coarse, black hair, and of copper-brown complexion. Of strong constitution, they were capable of great endurance, and shrank from no danger when in pursuit of a cherished purpose, either of love or hate. Intellectually, they were active, quick of discernment, and possessed of a cunning ingenuity which seemed, at times, closely allied to genius. They had no written language and no mental culture. Some knowledge they had of nature's forces, of the products of the earth and their properties, of the symptoms and forms of disease; some, too, of the ruder practical arts, and of the simpler forms of handicraft. Their morality was of a peculiar type. Of the principles of virtue they seemed to have no idea, and none of the distinction between right and wrong. Yet they were singularly free from some of the vices of modern life, while they illustrated certain virtues too rarely found in any community. As to religion, it may be questioned whether they had any worthy of the name, — any that had the least effect upon their conduct and character. Some faint conception of a God they may have entertained, — some notion of a future life; but there is little evidence showing that the spiritual element in them was ever roused to consciousness or clothed with any vital power.



To domestic and social ties and obligations, the Indian was, for the most part, a stranger. The word *home* had no place in his vocabulary, and none in his life-plan. Though acknowledging in a certain way the bonds of marriage, yet they were of most uncertain tenure, and unattended by those fond endearments, sweet solitudes, and tender affections which characterize any just form of family life. Socially, it was much the same with him. There was something of clannishness in his relations to those about him, pride of race, tribal loyalty, but of what is termed mutuality of feeling, reciprocity, fellowship, apparently nothing. The employment of the male Indian was hunting, fishing, and war, — chiefly the latter. That of the female, care of the wigwam, such as it was, cultivation of the soil, making clothing, braiding mats, and devising and putting together various contrivances and designs for personal or other ornamentation.

Although the Aborigines were more or less nomadic in their mode of life, wandering about from place to place in the summer time, yet each tribe had, as already suggested, its recognized extent or range of country, with its central seat or capital, and, except in time of war, rarely roamed beyond the boundaries of its own dominions. In the winter, all the members of a tribe gathered at or about its central seat, which was selected with reference to the nearness of good hunting grounds, fishing facilities, and open fields suitable to the raising of corn and other edibles at their command. From these three sources, they obtained a supply for their physical needs, adding thereto such nuts, roots, berries, etc., as nature about them spontaneously produced, and they rarely, if ever, had lack of the means of subsistence. Their clothing, what there was of it, was such as they could easily provide from certain grasses grown in the meadows and fields, from the fiber of certain woods, and from the skins and furs of wild beasts. Thus these denizens of the forest lived when our forefathers and foremothers came to these shores, and thus they reigned and revelled in their own chosen domain.

The country in this general region, at that early day, was not, as is sometimes supposed, one dense, impenetrable wilderness, through which it was almost, if not quite, impossible to make one's way. Not only were there frequent openings of meadow, intervals, and cleared lands, but much of the forest was so free of underbrush and rank growths of every sort, and so sparsely covered with trees, that grass and the more delicate kinds of herbage, and even strawberries, would grow there. Early writers were enthusiastic in their descriptions of the wooded sections of the country, comparing them to the parks of the English gentry. William Wood, the common ancestor of the family bearing that name in Westminster, author of a work entitled "New England's Prospects," published in England in





1636, says: "In many places, divers acres are so clear that one may ride a hunting" in them as he pleases. "There is no underwood save in swamps and lowlands, for it being the custom of the Indians to burn the woods in November, when the grass is withered and the leaves dry, it consumes the underbrush and rubbish." "There is good fodder" he adds, "in the woods when the trees are thin, and in the spring the grass grows rapidly on the burnt lands." Others note the same fact. It was only in the rougher, wilder sections that this annual clearing by fire did not take place. But along the borders of rivers and ponds, and wherever there were dry meadows and sandy plains, and gentle slopes of easily tilled and fruitful soil, and throughout the less broken and more traversable sections, the custom universally prevailed. Such were the abodes occupied by the Aborigines from time immemorial, and such the country which our Puritan ancestors found spreading out before them, when they set foot upon these coasts.

**Relations of Colonists and Indians.** In entering upon a consideration of the relations which the new-comers to this part of the country and the aboriginal dwellers here sustained to each other during the earlier years of New England history, it is worth while to be reminded of the original spirit and purpose of the former towards the latter. When the proposition to emigrate to America was first made to the little church of Separatists in Leyden, Holland, where a refuge had been sought from the persecutions of their English motherland,—of which church the Plymouth company was a branch,—one of the principal reasons urged in favor of doing so was, that they might be instrumental in bringing the native heathen inhabitants there to a knowledge of the gospel of Christ, and to a full enjoyment of the benefits and blessings which that gospel is calculated to secure. And this work was continually held up by their spiritual leader, John Robinson, as one of the prime objects to be gained by making the change proposed. In fact, this lay at the very heart of the Plymouth movement. It was the same in the case of the colony of the Massachusetts Bay. Mathew Craddock, its first governor in England, writing in 1629 to Endicott, in authority at Salem, tells him "not to be unmindful of the main end of our Plantation by endeavoring to bring the Indians to a knowledge of the gospel." There can be no doubt that the master spirits in both these colonies regarded themselves and their associates as missionaries of the Christian faith and heralds of salvation to the heathen tribes of the western world. The labors of John Eliot at Natick and elsewhere, and of Thomas Mayhew at Martha's Vineyard, were in the line of the intention and purpose of all the better elements among the first settlers of New England. How far the important object referred to was realized, will appear later on.

It was fortunate for the colonists that, coming here under



the inspiration of such a motive in respect to the Indians, they should find what might seem to be a providential opening for their advent. Some half a dozen years previous to the landing of the Pilgrims, as is well known, a fearful distemper or plague, presumably the small-pox, had prevailed among the natives inhabiting the eastern portions of the present state of Massachusetts; not only sweeping into the grave large numbers of the population, but causing those who were spared to flee from the death-smitten territory, and to remain permanently away from it. As a consequent, a strip of country along the coast, of varying width, extending from Merrimac River to Buzzard's Bay, was not only unoccupied, but practically abandoned, left open and free to whomsoever might take possession of it. By reason of this fact, the new-comers had no occasion to dispossess any actual residents upon the soil of their right to it, or to come into any immediate contact with the aboriginal tribes. The smoke of an Indian wigwam never rose through the trees towards the sky within many miles of Plymouth, after the settlement there, and no red man was ever seen at Boston or its immediate vicinity, subsequently to the English occupancy, except as a private visitor or the representative of a tribe. This condition of things was calculated to prevent collision between the two races, and trouble which might otherwise have occurred. It also worked to the advantage of the new-comers in another way. In various localities throughout this depopulated and deserted section of country, were there considerable stores of corn and other kinds of food buried in the earth, the depositors and owners of which had either died or gone to other parts, and for which there were no claimants, so that the colonists, in their great lack, at times, of the necessities of life, could replenish their wasted resources from these hidden treasures without injustice to any one, or any cause of offense on the part of those whose favor and good-will every consideration of self-interest, as well as humanity, honor, and religion, would prompt them to endeavor to secure.

There was something exceedingly interesting, — something touching and pathetic, indeed, — in the first meeting of the white and red man, after the settlement at Plymouth had taken place. The story of Samoset, a sagamore of the Monhegans, located on the Penobscot River, who unexpectedly appeared in the midst of the rude dwellings of the colonists, some three months subsequent to their landing, shouting, as he strolled leisurely along, "Welcome, Englishmen! Welcome, Englishmen!" thereby disarming all fear and gaining for himself a hearty greeting on the part of those to whom he thus introduced himself, is familiar to every reader of the annals of those times. So, also, is that of Tisquantum or Squanto, who some years before had been kidnapped and carried to Europe, but who, escaping, had returned to his native wilds again; who





proved to be of great service to the English as guide through the forests, and interpreter of the Indian dialects, and who imparted to them much valuable information in regard to the edible and medicinal products of the soil, the raising of corn and other vegetables, etc., — matters of which they were, for the most part, ignorant.

Another interesting, and, as the result showed, most fortunate event in the early experience of the Plymouth settlers, was the first visit of Massasoit, chief sachem of the Wampanoags, the tribe that formerly had claimed and exercised jurisdiction over the territory occupied by them. He came, accompanied by some sixty of his warriors, at the suggestion of Samoset, who introduced him to Governor Carver and others of the colony. A formidable and repulsive appearance these rude savages presented, indeed, but they manifested a kindly spirit, and expressed a desire to live with their new neighbors on terms of amity and friendship. So favorably impressed were the English with the temper and bearing of these denizens of the forest, that a treaty of peace and mutual protection was entered into at once between the two, and formally signed by the Governor and the Indian chief, — a treaty that was sacredly kept by both parties for nearly fifty years. The hearts of the Plymouth people were put quite to rest by this event. Their first contact with the natives had resulted favorably, and the newly-formed relations with them were full of promise for future years.

Massasoit proved to be a faithful friend and a most useful ally of the white population. Though a pagan, steadfastly set against all attempts to convert him or his people to the Christian religion, he was eminently just, humane, honest, never violating his word, and constantly endeavoring to imbue his people with a love of peace. He not only used his influence to prevent his own tribe from committing depredations upon the immigrants, but often dissuaded other tribes from carrying into effect plans of violence and massacre which they had formed. Or, failing in this, he would warn those threatened with attack, so as to enable them to prepare for it, or to flee to places of safety. This good chieftain died at Quaboag (Brookfield), as is supposed, in 1661, and in his death the colonists lost the best friend among the aborigines they ever had.

After much the same fashion, and in a similar spirit, did the Massachusetts Colony established at and about Boston form friendly relations with the natives of their general vicinity. Though no formal treaty was made, so far as is known, between the two, yet there never was an outbreak, and never any serious difficulty occurred. Governor Winthrop was on good terms with Chicatobet, chief sachem of the Massachusetts, often receiving him to his house, and exchanging with him tokens of hospitality and good-will. Transfers of lands were satisfactorily adjusted between the old occupants and the new, and both





"Governor and Court, evidently tried to maintain relations of amity and equity with the nations round about them." The strictest injunction to just dealing was given to the representatives and administrators of the affairs of this colony at the very outset. "If any of the savages pretend right of inheritance," was the charge to Endicott, "we pray you endeavor to purchase their title, that no wrong be done to the natives."

This same spirit and policy prevailed throughout the settlements of New England generally, during all the earlier years of its history. No doubt something of the worldly prudence and disposition to drive a sharp bargain, for which the Yankee of a more modern date is somewhat noted, characterized, in a measure, his Puritan progenitors, and very likely their transactions with the uncommercial savage were not always in conformity with the highest interpretations of the golden rule; yet it has been said that not a rod of land was ever permanently occupied by the colonists without the consent of those claiming a right of proprietorship in it, and the rendering to them of such equivalents of money or other valuables, of favors granted, or protection pledged, as was at the time acknowledged to be satisfactory. Would that the same spirit and policy had always prevailed and characterized the dealings of the more civilized race with the more barbarous one! Then a bloody chapter in the annals of early New England would not have been written, and the Puritan name would have escaped a dark and deplorable reproach. Then, indeed, more recent conflicts with the Indians would have been avoided, and the escutcheon of a great republic would never have been soiled with the stains of a dishonor which have too often tarnished it, and which the waters of all her rivers can never wash out.

Nevertheless, it is to be remembered that the colonists proper were not responsible for the early acts of violence and bloodshed which occurred within their borders. The affair at Wessagusset (Weymouth), in 1622, in which Capt. Miles Standish was a prominent actor at the last, and of which the pious Robinson said, "O, that they had converted some before they had killed any," was instigated by a set of "rude fellows of the baser sort," in no wise connected with, or related to, the Plymouth settlers, who provoked the natives to wrath and revenge by their insolence and abuse, by stealing their corn and otherwise wronging them, and who, as a last resort, to save themselves from a fate threatened them by reason of their own sinful folly, applied to Plymouth for help. The "Pequod War," a most fearful and disastrous conflict, occurring in Connecticut in 1636, which resulted in the practical extinction of one of the aboriginal tribes of that section, as a matter of fact was the culmination of a long-standing feud between the Pequods and Mohegans. By the cunning arts of the latter, the English settlers were unwittingly drawn into the current of the strife,



caught in the trap carefully laid for them, and only fought to the bitter end when they found themselves, by the plottings of their professed friends, face to face with their foes, and saw no way to do otherwise.

A most interesting and significant phase of the relations existing between the whites and the Indians, appears in the work of evangelization, already alluded to, inaugurated by Rev. John Eliot of Roxbury. Through his tireless labors, begun in 1646 and continued for more than thirty years, he gained to the Christian faith about four thousand converts, whom he established in seven praying towns, as they were termed, and at as many more preaching stations about the country. The residents of the praying towns gave up, for the most part, their wandering life, subsisted themselves by their own labors, with occasional hunting and fishing, and adopted very largely the habits and ways of civilized communities. They had their local habitations, their schools, meeting-houses, native preachers and teachers, officers and magistrates. They had orchards, gardens, and well-tilled fields. Everything denoted industry, thrift, and a growing refinement. Some of the converts gave signs of unusual intellectual power, becoming noted for their attainments and for their high character. One proved a skillful printer, and was the chief helper of Eliot in carrying through the press that notable and herculean work of his,—the Indian bible. Another entered Harvard College, and, having pursued a full course of study, graduated with honors. Surely a good work had been wrought among the rude sons of the forest, who had thus put on the forms, the amenities, and the moral features of an enlightened Christian people. Glowing accounts of what had been accomplished were sent to England, and great hopes were entertained on both sides the sea of what was soon to be realized in this behalf for the salvation of men and the glory of God.

After-events, however, proved the illusiveness of this expectation. The radiance which gladdened the vision of devout enthusiasts was only a flashing of heaven's light through here and there a rift in the clouds, and not the rising dawn of a never-failing day. For, in the midst of these hopeful rejoicings, there came forebodings of a fearful storm soon to burst forth, which should convulse the land, bring to an end all this blessed work, and put a new face on New England history.

**King Philip's War.** Massasoit was dead. The wise, the humane, the magnanimous chief of the Wampanoags—the constant and trustworthy friend of the white man, had gone. For forty years he lived side by side with the colonists, mingling freely with them, and no ripple of displeasure or distrust had arisen to mar the harmony of their mutual good-will. No rupture or outbreak had occurred to add a new paragraph to “the purple testament of bloody war,” or bring reproach upon





the blessed gospel of the Prince of Peace. But he had passed "to the fair hunting-grounds beyond the sky," and Wamsutta, his eldest son, otherwise called Alexander, succeeded him as chief of the Wampanoags. Indications of a less friendly policy than his father pursued towards the new settlers soon appeared, and rumors were current calculated to awaken fear and apprehension in the breast of those who before had found no occasion for questioning or distrust. Explanations were called for and made, with promises of continued amity and peace. The same experience was repeated, but to little purpose. Suspicious occurrences continued to arise, and matters wore a threatening aspect. Before anything satisfactory was accomplished in the way of restoring confidence, amid protestations of innocence and good faith on the part of the sachem, he died. In his stead reigned Metacom, a younger brother, whom the English named Philip, — a man as unlike his father almost as possible, — cold-blooded, sullen, revengeful, and a lover of strife and war.

At first, however, things seemed to go on well. Fair promises were made, and pledges given of amity and good will. But they were soon felt to be insincere — disguises to hide an evil purpose, quiet the apprehensions of the whites, throw them off their guard, that they might more easily be made a prey. Circumstances arose and events transpired calculated to create anxiety and alarm, yet Philip renewed his professions of friendship, and avowed his readiness to serve those who were suspicious of his conduct and called him to account. Nevertheless, his real feeling could not be wholly masked, nor his fell purpose be kept out of sight. Both became more and more apparent as time went on, and were evidently awaiting an occasion to openly declare themselves and hurry matters on to a bloody consummation.

That occasion very soon arose. Sassamon, a convert of Eliot, friendly to the whites, reported Philip's doings and his murderous designs. Not long after he was assassinated, his body being thrown into a lake in Middleboro', where it was not long after found. Three Indians, suspected of the crime, were arrested, tried, convicted, and executed.

This transaction set the blood of the sachem and his young warriors on fire. They gathered their forces at Mt. Hope, their chief seat in Bristol, preparatory to a formal onset upon the different English settlements. Marauding parties were sent out in different directions, to commit outrages upon the whites, to provoke them to violence, and to kill them. This was done in most unexpected places, at a most unexpected moment, and after a most brutal and ferocious fashion. The first act of the drama of bloodshed and death, took place at Swansea, Mass., on Sunday, June 24, 1675, when a party of worshippers, returning from church, were assaulted and several of them slain, their bodies being lacerated and mangled in the

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most inhuman manner. The surprises and horrid massacres at Taunton, Middleboro', Dartmouth, and Mendon, aroused the colonies to the gravity of the situation, and convinced them of the fact that a war had actually been inaugurated by the red men, and was designed to be one of extermination. Companies of soldiery were raised and sent through the country in search of the enemy; but, unaccustomed to the Indian style of warfare, they were often surprised by squads in ambush and repulsed with great loss. Philip, however, hard pressed, fled from his place of retreat at Pocasset, to the Nipmuck country, partly for his personal safety and partly to secure the co-operation of certain inland tribes who had not thus far joined in the uprising. Succeeding in this purpose, the theater of conflict was transferred to central and western Massachusetts, and the record of what transpired at Brookfield, Deerfield, Hadley, Northfield, Springfield, and other places, shows how fearful and desperate was the struggle between the contending forces,—between barbarism and civilization,—for the mastery of the country.

The cold season was drawing on, and the Indians, now pretty generally united in a common purpose, gathered from all directions in the Narragansett country, where they went into winter quarters. Meanwhile, the three colonies of Plymouth, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, fully aware of the perils that threatened them, rose to the exigences of the situation, and resolved to meet the crisis in an emphatic and decisive way. Hitherto they had acted separately, each on its own account, sending soldiery as they saw fit in different directions, to meet what were thought to be the immediate demands of the case. But now they decided to take counsel together and act in co-operation, to serve a cause common to all of them, and to gain an end in which all had a most vital interest. They therefore sent commissioners to Boston, empowering them to make proper and adequate provision for the defense and safety of all concerned.

These commissioners met on the second day of November, 1675. After due deliberation it was decided that, in addition to the forces already in the field, an army of a thousand men should be raised and furnished with weapons and provisions, to be ready at an hour's notice for marching orders in the public service. At another meeting, held ten days later, Josiah Winslow, governor of Plymouth, was appointed commander-in-chief of this army, and further arrangements were entered into for enlisting recruits and duly providing for their needs. A third meeting took place Nov. 19th, when final plans were adopted for an expedition against the enemy already encamped, as stated, among the Narragansetts, who, against their repeated pledges, had not only joined Philip and his allies, but received large numbers of other hostile tribes into their territory. Places of rendezvous for the enlisted troops were selected, where





they were to meet on the 10th of December, and await the orders of the commander-in-chief.

The soldiers of the colonies were raised and assigned to their different places and posts of duty. Those belonging to Massachusetts marched from Boston, where they first assembled, to Dedham, Dec. 9th, and bivouacked for the night. Before starting out on the following day, proclamation was made to them, in the name of the colonial government, that, in addition to their regular pay for service, they, or their heirs or representatives after them, should have a special grant of land, "provided they played the man, captured the fort where the great body of the enemy was entrenched, and drove him out of the country." Proceeding thereafter from Dedham, these forces were soon joined by those from Plymouth, and still later by the quota from Connecticut, when all went together to the land of the Narragansetts, on the westerly borders of Narragansett Bay, arriving there Dec. 18th. They spent the night at a place some fifteen miles from the intrenchments, within which the Indians had taken refuge. These intrenchments included an area of several acres in extent, located upon a swell of dry land, the center of a large swamp, in what is now the town of South Kingston, R. I. There the enemy had built a village of six hundred wigwams, surrounding it with a strong stockade, through which there were but two small entrances, both protected on the outside by an efficient guard. This was the objective point toward which the English army was making its way.

Early on the morning of the 19th, this army, still weary from previous marches, took up its line of advance in the midst of a driving snowstorm which continued all day. Arriving at the swamp about two o'clock, an attack was at once made upon the fortification. The guard outside, after a sharp contest, was slain, entrance was gained, and a terrible battle ensued, lasting several hours, and terminating in the entire destruction of the place by fire. The result was a complete triumph over the Indians, of whom it was estimated that a thousand persons, including three hundred warriors, were killed or taken captive, while as many more, perhaps, driven forth into the wilderness, perished by hunger and exposure. The English paid dearly for their victory, losing six of their brave captains and about eighty men, while one hundred and fifty others were more or less severely wounded. Nor was this the sum total of their sufferings. Over-wearyed with the morning's march, and weakened by want of food when they began battle, they were in a poor condition, when it closed, to retrace their steps through the snow to the place where they encamped the preceding night. Yet they succeeded in doing this, though many of their number came near perishing before it was accomplished. Happily, they found, upon waking from their slumbers the





following morning, that a vessel was moored in the bay close by, which had been sent by the Governor of Massachusetts with a cargo of provisions for their special use. By the supplies thus furnished, their exhausted, famishing frames were refreshed and strengthened anew, enabling them to return home at an early day.

This was the great battle of the Narragansett War, the battle known in history as "The Swamp Fight." But, though resulting so disastrously to the Indians, it did not, by any means, bring the conflict to an end. Hostilities and massacres of a desultory, guerilla character continued through the winter, spring, and most of the ensuing summer. Bands of Indian warriors went roaming through the country, attacking and destroying settlements, killing many, and carrying others into captivity, and working all possible injury to the white population. Lancaster, Medfield, and Groton were surprised and burned before the spring of 1676 opened, and assaults were made on Northampton, Seekonk, Marlboro', Sudbury, and other places, not long afterward, with varying results; the victory inclining sometimes to one side and again to the other. A terrible tragedy at Turner's Falls occurred in the latter part of May, and during the early summer several towns in different sections of the country were attacked with more or less decisive effect. As time went on, the English, in no wise disposed to withdraw from the conflict or relax their efforts, made slow but substantial progress, while the power of the red man was evidently waning. The Indians, realizing this, began to lose heart and hope. The Nipmucks withdrew from Philip's support, as did others, leaving him at length with few adherents.

Where the proud and haughty chieftain was all the while, it is difficult to tell. When he first left his native retreat at Mount Hope, he tarried for a time with the Quaboags, at Brookfield. Afterwards he appeared among the tribes of the Connecticut valley. During the winter he visited the Mohawks in New York, and endeavored to enlist that warlike tribe in his behalf, but with indifferent success. Early in the spring he was back in the valley of the Connecticut where Mrs. Rowlandson, wife of the minister of Lancaster, a captive at the time of the destruction of the town in February, testifies to meeting him repeatedly. In May he accompanied the party having Mrs. Rowlandson in charge to Redemption Rock, near what is now Everettville, and was present when the terms of her ransom were agreed upon, but refused to unite with other warriors present in consenting to the same. They, however, overruled him and she was set free. From this fact, it is evident that he had lost prestige and power among his own people, and that the day of his utter discomfiture and overthrow was at hand. Of this he himself must have been painfully aware, as, bereft of his most trusted and valiant defenders, he turned from his long wander-



ings once more to Mount Hope, the place of his nativity. Even there he found no rest to his feet and no comfort for his heart. His family had been taken captive, and few were the friends left to him. Disarmed and despairing, he sought a refuge from his pursuers, now close upon his track, in the dense thicket of an old swamp not far away, where he hoped to escape discovery. But his place of retreat was found, and Captain Church, a famous Indian fighter, at the head of a company of brave men, determined to capture him. Surrounding the woods where he was concealed, they closed in from every side. As they drew near him, he sprang from his hiding-place, and, seeking to break through the ranks of his foes, was shot by one of his own race who had abandoned his cause, the gun of a white man previously aimed at him having missed fire.

The king of the Wampanoags was now no more. He had played a desperate game and had lost all. His death occurred Aug. 12, 1676, which event was the virtual ending of the conflict, called from its chief instigator, *King Philip's War*, and from the country of its principal battle, *the Narragansett War*. The colonists had suffered fearfully in the struggle, thirteen towns having been destroyed, and many more greatly damaged, six hundred buildings burned, six hundred lives lost, and an expense of \$500,000 incurred. Nevertheless, they had gained the victory, and the power of the red man in this section of country had gone forever. The aborigines, seeking to exterminate the new-comers, were themselves exterminated. What were left, when hostilities ceased, with few exceptions, soon disappeared, and the sovereignty of the white race was assured for all coming time.





## CHAPTER IV.

### CLAIMS OF THE NARRAGANSETT SOLDIERS.

PETITIONS FOR LANDS—LEGISLATIVE ACTION—HOPE DEFERRED—  
THE PROMISE FULFILLED.

**Request for Land Grants.** Nearly ten years expired after the termination of the war with King Philip and his allies, before anything was done, so far as any known records show, to secure the fulfilment of the promise in regard to lands, which was made to the soldiers on Dedham plain, by authority of the provincial government. At length, early in 1685, a petition, stating the case in full and asking appropriate action, was drawn up and signed by William Bassett and about forty others belonging to Lynn, Reading, Beverly, and Hingham, acting in behalf of the Narragansett soldiers, as those who had served in the conflict were called, which was presented to the general court at the session convened on the 4th of June. In answer to that petition, the court "judged it meet to grant a tract of Land of eight miles square in the Nipmug country, for the encouragement of the Petitioners and others that were serviceable to the Country in the late Indian war to a competent number who shall see meet to join themselves to them in order to the making of a plantation or township, provided it be laid out so as not to interfere with any former Grants, and that an Orthodox minister on their settlement of fifty families be settled within the space of four years next coming."

Of this judgment or "order," nothing practically ever came, so far as can be ascertained, and the subject seemed to receive no further attention for more than forty years, or until a large majority of those engaged in the Narragansett service had gone to their graves. But in the month of June, 1727, "Samuel Chandler and Jacob Wright in behalf of themselves and many others who were personally present at the Fort and Fight at Narragansett, or descendants of those who were there, or in the strictest alliance with them" sent a petition to the colonial legislature, praying "that a Grant be made to them of such vacant lands as may serve for settlements, under such restrictions and limitations as the Court judge fit."

This petition received favorable consideration from the house of representatives, which appointed a committee to lay out a township eight miles square, as before, for the petitioners and others for whom they acted, but the council, the higher branch



of the government, referred the subject to the next session of the court, which met in the latter part of the year. On the 14th of December the house, in pursuance thereof, passed a resolve granting *two* townships, each of the contents of six miles square, in which action the council concurred, but the governor, William Dummer, declined to approve the same, and so nothing decisive was accomplished.

A third attempt, made the next summer, proved more successful, as shown by the following extract from the records:

"15 June 1728. In the House of Representatives. In answer to the Petition of the Soldiers that served in the Narraganset War:—

"*Resolved*, that Major Chandler, Mr. Edward Shove, Major Tilestone, & Mr. John Hobson, (or any three of them,) be a committee fully authorized and empowered to survey & lay out two Townships of the contents of Six miles square each in some of the unappropriated Lands of this Province and that the said Lands be granted and disposed of to the Persons, whether Officers or Soldiers, belonging to this Province, who were in the Service of their Country in the said Narraganset War, or to their lawful Representatives, as a Reward for their publick services and as a full Satisfaction of the Grant formerly made by the Great and General Court:— and, inasmuch as it is the full Intent and Purpose that every Officer & Soldier who served in the said war should have a Compensation made him over & above what Wages & Gratuities any of them have already received:— *That* publick Notice be given in the *News Letter* & Advertisements be posted up in every Town in the Province, notifying all Persons that now survive & were in the Fight & the legal Representatives of those deceased, that they give or send a List of their names & Descents to the Court in their next Fall Sessions; and when such List is completed by a Committee then to be appointed by this Court, the Grantees shall be obliged to assemble in as short a time as they can, conveniently, not exceeding six months, & proceed to the Choice of a Committee to regulate each Propriety, who shall pass such Orders & Rules as will effectually oblige them to settle sixty Families at least in each Township, with a learned Orthodox Minister, within the Space of Seven years from the Date of the Grant: *Provided*, nevertheless, if the said Grantees shall not effectually settle the said number of Families in each Township & also lay out a Lot for the said settled Minister, one for the Ministry & one for the School in each of the said Townships they shall have no advantage but forfeit their said Grants; anything to the contrary herein contained notwithstanding.

"In Council: Read and Concurred.

"Consented to: WM. DUMMER."

Pursuant to the provisions of the above resolve, a majority of the committee named therein made report of their doings to the legislature on the 18th of the following December, as shown by the records of that body at that date. So much of those records as relates to the matter in hand, is herewith submitted:

"A Plan given in by Maj. John Chandler, Mr. Edward Shove, & Mr. John Hobson, a Committee of the Court, describing a Tract of Land containing Twenty three thousand, two hundred & eighty six acres two rods and one Perch, without allowance for the Pond, which is supposed to contain at least two hundred and forty six acres, two rods and one perch; the Residue, (being 23,400 acres) is the Contents of six miles Square and laid out in as regular a Figure as the Land would admit of for one of the Towns granted by the General Court at their Session held the 29<sup>th</sup> day of May



[June 15], 1728, to the Narraganset Soldiers, Surveyed by the Assistance of Mr. Jonas Houghton, Surveyor, and four Chainmen, all upon Oath; which land lies adjoining to the Towns of Rutland and Lunenburg additional Grant, & also adjoins to Province Land.

"In the House of Representatives, Read & Accepted & Voted that the Land protracted & described in the within Plan be & hereby [is] confirmed to the Officers and Soldiers belonging to the Province who were in the Service of the Country in the late Narraganset War, & to their heirs and Assigns or lawful Representatives, *Provided* it exceeds not the quantity of Land within mentioned, nor interferes with any other or former grant of this Court; *Provided*, also, they Comply with the Conditions mentioned in the said vote of the seventh [15th] of June for settling the said Town.

"In Council, Read and Concurred. Consented to, W. BURNET."

This was the township afterwards called Narragansett No. 2 (Westminster), although, in point of time, it was the first one submitted to and accepted by the several departments of the provincial legislature. Another, No. 3 (afterwards Amherst, N. H.), was reported and approved the same day.

In further compliance with the requisitions of the resolve of June 15th, notices were issued to all persons claiming an interest in the lands therein granted, to report themselves to the court, responses to which seem to have been made in considerable numbers, though not in season to secure, as was intended, the appointment of a committee at the next fall session, to consider and determine the rights of such claimants. For it was not till April 11, 1729, that the matter received further attention. At that date, Major Quincy and Mr. Thomas Cushing, on the part of the house, and Thomas Hutchinson, Esq., on the part of the council, were appointed, with the approval of the governor, a committee "to take and examine a List of the Claimers to those Lands lately granted to the Narraganset Soldiers and Compleat the same according to the order of the 8th [15th] of June last, and report of their doings at the next May Session at the publick Charge."

Nothing was heard from this committee at the date designated, as there probably had not been sufficient time to properly examine and prove all the claims presented. But on the 17th of the ensuing December, a list of claimants was formally presented, accompanied by the following report, to wit:

"The Committee, having carefully considered the Claimes y<sup>t</sup> have been laid before them of Rights in the two Tracts of land granted to the Officers & Souldiers that wear att the Narraganset Fight or their Leagall Representatives are of Opinion that the said Tracts of Land be granted to the persons contained in the aforwritten List and that the said Claimers or Grantees meet att Boston, if the Small Pox be not there, if it be, then at Cambridge, on the first wensday of June next then and ther to Choose a Committee for Ordering their affaires and to do other things needful for Setling s<sup>d</sup> Tracts of Land pursuant to the Resolve of this Court at their Session in June 1728 and that publick Notification be given by Order of this Assembly that they meet by them selves or Agents accordingly.

"Per order of the Committee."





The court accepted the report and voted to confirm the grant of lands referred to, to the persons approved, and to adopt the recommendation that a meeting of the claimants or grantees be held as specified, "to take proper action with reference to the right ordering of their affairs &c." This order of the court was signed by the governor. In accordance with this action, the meeting provided for was duly notified, but as the day named for holding it drew near, it was ascertained that the notice had not been sufficiently circulated through the province to reach all the persons interested in the matter. For this reason, the order of the court, under the authority of which the meeting had been called, was suspended on the 30th of May, 1730, and a new one was passed fixing the date "on the 2d Wednesday of the next Fall Session of this Court" [Oct. 28], and the representatives were directed "to give notice of this vote in their towns with all convenient speed."

Many of the grantees, however, who had seen the original announcement of the meeting on the third day of June, but who did not hear of the postponement, came together in Cambridge at that date, when they learned what had been done. Nevertheless, they assumed the responsibility, in the interest of all concerned, of appointing Col. Thomas Tilestone, Mr. Jonathan Williams, Mr. John Wadsworth, Mr. Nathaniel Goodwin, and Mr. Thomas Hunt, a committee "to Petition the General Court for a further Grant of land to ye Officers and Soldiers, that every Sixty Claimers may have a Township Six Miles square." This committee, though not chosen according to strict forms of law, proceeded to act in the way indicated, and their action was subsequently endorsed by their associate grantees, as will hereafter appear.

As the time to which the meeting of the grantees provided for by the court had been postponed (Oct. 28) drew near, it was found that, on account of the prevalence of the small-pox, it was advisable to make a second change of date. An order of the legislature was passed accordingly, fixing the place and day of meeting at Boston, "on the second Wednesday of the next sitting of this Court after a recess," which was Dec. 23d. Nothing intervening, the grantees convened as required, and, after duly organizing by the choice of Col. Thomas Tilestone, moderator, and Jabez Hunt, clerk, voted "that Col. William Dudley, Messrs. Samuel Chandler and John Longley be a committee to wait upon the General Court to press the affair now in hand." The "affair now in hand" was evidently the securing of a further grant of land as already petitioned for by Colonel Tilestone and others—the committee chosen at the informal meeting of June 3d, as stated. Four days before this meeting of the grantees, the matter had been considered by the legislature, but had not been carried to a final and satisfactory issue, as appears from the records:



"Dec. 19, 1730. On petition of Thomas Tilestone and others representing the Narraganset Soldiers, showing that the number of soldiers was too great for the land assigned and asking that the grant be enlarged and that more time be allowed to complete the work required of them. Voted, that a committee be appointed to receive claims of Narraganset Soldiers till the first Wednesday of April next, and that further grants be made to approved Claimants to the extent of one town to every one hundred and twenty persons under the same conditions as enjoined before."

This vote passed the house, the council concurred, but the new governor, Jonathan Belcher, refused to give it his signature.

At this point, the matter "hung fire" for more than two years, although the grantees, or their proper agents, were all the while doing what they could to advance their interests and gain their purposed ends. The council receded from its original position in their favor, and for a time hindered progress, but the governor proved to be the most serious obstacle in the way of success. At a meeting of grantees, held Jan. 13, 1730-1, Messrs. Jonathan Williams and Nathaniel Goodwin were added to the previously appointed committee to wait upon the general court and secure favorable action in the premises—a trust they no doubt fulfilled.

On the 17th of February, the house, on petition of Thomas Hunt and others, passed a resolve substantially as before, extending the time for receiving claims, however, to the first Wednesday in June, and ordering that the former committees for laying out the townships and for determining claims, perform the service before assigned them, respectively. The council concurred, so far as extending the time of receiving claims was concerned, but declined to approve of additional land appropriations, and ordered "that lands *already granted* [that is, two townships of the contents of six miles square each] be given and confirmed to such persons as have their claims allowed, any former order of this Court to the contrary notwithstanding."

The grantees held a meeting Feb. 24th, and in order to obviate the necessity of calling the whole body together for the purpose of guarding and furthering their interests, voted "that there shall be a Standing Committee to Act and Carry on the Affaires from time to time that lies before the General Court." This committee consisted of "Col. Wm. Dudley, Col. Thomas Tyleston, Capt. Edw. White, Messrs. Nathaniel Goodwin, Samuel Chandler, Jonathan Williams, Edward Shove, Jonas Houghton, and Jabez Hunt," who were authorized to petition the court for further grants of land, and when successful, to notify the interested parties accordingly. Then the meeting adjourned till the 1st of September following.

By action of this committee, it is presumed, the matter of new grants was considered by the legislature on the 4th of the next June, 1731, with the same result as before; the house





voting in favor of the proposition, the council refusing its concurrence.

At a grantees' meeting, held Sept. 1st, as per adjournment, a committee consisting of Colonel Tilestone, Jonas Houghton, Nathaniel Goodwin, Samuel Chandler, Jacob Wright, and Samuel Kneeland, was chosen, "to regulate and settle the two townships granted by ye Gen. Ct. to the Narraganset Soldiers whose names are in the lists Allowed of by the General Court," and "to petition the Gen. Ct. (If there be Occation) for more land."

Agreeably to these instructions, the committee caused a petition to be presented at the next session in December, by Mr. Samuel Chandler. Whereupon the house repeated its previous action in favor of the request, and appointed a committee to prepare an address to the council, with the view of inducing that body to concur therein. While this subject was under advisement, the standing committee of the grantees, at a meeting held Jan. 6, 1731-2, instructed Samuel Kneeland, who had been chosen their clerk, to confer with the said committee of the house of representatives, for the purpose of aiding them in their work and making it as effective as possible. The result of all this is indicated in an extract from the court records:

"In the House of Representatives, 19 Jan. 1731-2. Ordered, that ye following message be sent up to the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Board.

"*Whereas*, there have been several endeavors to accommodate the Narragansett soldiers & their Descendants with a Suitable Quantity of Land for the Settlement, as an Acknowledgement & Reward for their great Service to this Country, which have failed hitherto of the desired Success. This House have thought it might tend to promote a good understanding & Harmony in this Court to lay before the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Board wherefore it is that the Represent<sup>ves</sup> have come into the Grant of a Tract of six miles square to each number of one hundred and twenty persons, which they have made this Session in answer to the Petition of Thomas Tilestone & others, a Comm<sup>tee</sup> in behalf of themselves and the rest of the Soldiers & their Descendants who were in the Narraganset War. And one great Reason is that there was a Proclamation made to the Army in the name of the Govern<sup>mt</sup>,—as living witnesses very fully testify,—when they were mustered on Dedham Plain, where they began their March, that if they played the Man took the Fort and Drove the Enemy out of the Narraganset Country which was their great Seat, that they should have a gratuity in Land beside their Wages; and it is well known that this was done; and as the Conditions have been performed, certainly the Promise, in all Equity and Justice ought to be fulfilled; and if we consider the Difficulties these brave men went through in Storming the Fort in the Depth of Winter & the pinching wants they afterward underwent in pursuing the Indians that escaped, thro' a hideous wilderness famously known throughout New England to this day by the name of the hungry March; and if we further consider that until this brave tho' small army thus played the Man the whole Country was filled with Distress & fear & we trembled in this Capital Boston itself, and that to the Goodness of God [and] to this army we owe our Fathers and our own Safety and Estates. We cannot but think y<sup>t</sup> those Instrum<sup>ts</sup> of our Deliverance and Safety ought to be not only justly but also gratefully & generously rewarded & even with much more than they prayed for. If we measure w<sup>t</sup> they receive from us by w<sup>t</sup> we enjoy & have received from them, we need not men-



tion to ye Hon<sup>ble</sup> Board the Wisdom Justice & Generosity of Our Mother Country & ye Ancient Romans on such occasions. Triumphs, Orations, Hereditary Honors & privileges: All the Riches, Lands & Spoils of War & conquer<sup>d</sup> Countries have not been thought to great for those to whom they have not owed more if so much as We do to those our Deliverers & we ought further to observe, what greatly adds to their merit that they were not vagabonts & Beggars & Outcasts of wh<sup>ch</sup> Armies are sometimes considerably made up who run the Hazards of War to avoid the Danger of Starving; so far from this that these were some of ye best of Our Men, the Fathers & Sons of some of ye greatest & best of Our families and could have no other view but to serve ye Country & whom God was pleased accordingly in a very remarkable manner to Honor & Succeed. Of these things the Hon<sup>ble</sup> the General Court of the Late Colony of the Massachusetts in those days was not insensible & accordingly gave to ye Soldiers being upward of Five Hundred ab<sup>t</sup> Two Thirds of the Army that went from ye Massachusetts & the late Colony of Plymouth, a tract of ab<sup>t</sup> forty thousand acres in the Nipmug Country, this, or the value of it these Soldiers would be contented with & take in their Brethren of Plimouth too tho' that sh<sup>d</sup> take away two thirds of w<sup>t</sup> was granted them, and would after that have more in value than w<sup>t</sup> they now ask for them all, for every one must own that 40,000 acres in the Heart of the Country, as the Nipmug Country is, is of more value than five times that quantity in the Borders & in danger if there should be a French war as is and would be the case with all the unappropriated Lands of the Province w<sup>ch</sup> they now ask for.

*"It is hoped that* the neglect of these petition<sup>rs</sup> so long or the province's having disposed of the Nipmug Country to others & so defeated their ancient Grants will not be thought to wear out any more than it rewards their merit. The Grant seems to be to have been made in acknowledgem<sup>nt</sup> both of ye promise & of ye fulfilling ye condition & being well entitled to it & there is great Reason to fear that publick Guilt w<sup>d</sup> ly upon the Country if we should neglect & continue in the Breach of this Promise after it has been made & omitted for above fifty years.

*"As to the late Grant of two Townships to Seven or Eight hundred of these Soldiers. It is so far below the value of the Land they conquered & the price the Province had for it when it was sold & the money divided to the Colonies that carried on the war. It is such a Pittance of wh<sup>t</sup> they obtained for us, so exceedingly beneath w<sup>t</sup> the Province has defeated them of, which was granted to about Two-thirds of them in the Nipmug Country, that it is rather mocking and deriding them to offer it. Beyond w<sup>t</sup> has been offered it sh<sup>d</sup> be Considered that to grant the present petition & give such a quantity of Land as may be worth Settling & upon Conditions of bringing forward Townships is more agreeable to Charter and for the publick Good than to Give away Tracts of Land & suffer and even tempt men to let them ly waste & unimproved, for in the way that has been proposed & in which some Progress has been made the Lands will be divided into such scraps that they will not be worth receiving."*

This message was read in the council on the same day, Jan. 19, 1731-2, and appears to have had its designed affect, inasmuch as that body immediately voted to concur with the house in its action upon the matter so long held in abeyance. But the object sought for was still unattained, on account of the refusal of the governor to affix his signature to the resolve, and to win him over to the support of the cause of the soldiers, and the approval of the action of the court became now the effort and aim of the standing committee of the grantees. Accordingly, at a meeting held the day after the favorable action of the council, Jan. 20th, they voted "that Mr. Samuel Chandler wait





upon Mr. Samuel Wells [a man of high standing and of great influence in public affairs] and Desier him to use his Intrist with his Excellency the Governor to sine the Grant of both Houses to the Narraganset Soldiers"; also voted "that Mr. Jonathan Williams wait upon Con<sup>l</sup> Byfield for the same."

Time went on, and the executive remained firm in his opposition. But the standing committee were equally firm and determined in their course. They would not suffer their case to be defaulted, or fail from want of proper vigilance and action on their part. They therefore, on April 13th,

*"Voted*, that Messrs Nathaniel Goodwin and Jonathan Williams git a Petition writ to put into the General Court at their next Session in May for a further Grant of land to the Narraganset Soldiers, the Grant made at the last Session not having been Sined by the Governor."

Soon after the sitting of the court, on the 1st of June, the same committee

*"Voted*, that Mr. Nathaniel Goodwin pay for writing the Petition and that Mr. Samuel Chandler forward the Petition as fast as Possible in the House of Representatives" [of which body he was a member].

A week later, June 8th, they

*"Voted*, that Messrs Nathaniel Goodwin and Jonathan Williams pay the Secretary for putting the Petition into the Councel."

*"Voted*, that as many of the Committee as have an Oportunity to forward the Pet<sup>n</sup> with the Hon<sup>ble</sup> the members of the Genral Court use there Intrist with them that the prayer thereof be granted."

On the same day, a petition from parties now unknown, praying for a revival of the original petition of Thomas Tileston and others, was introduced into the house, resulting in the passage of an order granting additional tracts of land, with accompanying provisions for laying them out, etc., as set forth hereafter. This order was approved by the council, but the governor refused or neglected to sign it.

On the 28th of June the committee chosen to examine claims and approve titles of soldiers, reported to the court a complete list of persons having a right to a share in the lands granted, or to be granted, to the number of eight hundred and forty. A vote accepting and adopting the report, and affirming the rights of those named, was passed by both houses, whose action the executive endorsed by his signature.

Two days later, June 30th, the house made a formal grant of five new townships, with accompanying provisions for placing them in possession of the grantees, etc., and this action was concurred in by the council on the 4th of July, but the governor withheld his approval.

On the 6th of July the standing committee of the grantees, learning that the executive still refused his signature to the





orders of the court, and that the said court was about to adjourn, met and

"Voted, that Samuel Chandler and Samuel Kneeland go to Mr. Samuel Wells to know wheather he has been with the Governor and used his Intrist with him to sine the Grant and if he has not been to Desier him to go forthwith."

"Voted, that Nathaniel Goodwin, Samuel Chandler Jonathan Williams and Samuel Kneeland wait upon the Secretary [of the Province probably] for to know wheather he has laid the Grant before his Excellency the Governor for him to sine."

Here matters rested for more than eight months. All that was deemed possible had been done to carry the project through to a successful issue. The interested parties had only to await patiently the final action of the executive. At length he yielded. On the 20th of April, 1733, he affixed his name to the order granting additional lands, and on the 26th he did the same to that providing for the survey of five new townships, and for their proper ordering and settlement. On account of the intrinsic importance of these orders, as terminating a long struggle for the Narragansett soldiers' rights, and as securing to their first proprietors the several grants involved, the full text of them is herewith given :

"In the House of Representatives, June 8, 1732. Read and in answer to this petition [of Thomas Tileston] ordered, that such further Grant of Land be made to the Petitioners as that every One hundred and Twenty persons, whose Claimes have been or shall be allowed of by this Court within four months from this time, may have a Township of the Contents of Six miles square under the same Regulations and Limitations with the other Towns Already Granted, and that the Committee formerly appointed to lay out the Towns for the Narraganset Souldiers be a Committee to Lay out the Land above granted, and that the Province be att the charge of laying out the Same but not of any Subdivitions to any perticular persons.

"Sent up for concurrence,

J. QUINCY, Speaker.

"In Council June 9 1732. Read and Concured J WILLARD Secr'y.

"April 20 1733 Consented to

J BELCHER."

"In the House of Representatives, June 30, 1732. Read and Ordered, that the prayer of the Petitioners be granted, and that Majr Chandler, Mr. Edward Shove, Coll<sup>l</sup> Thomas Tillston, Mr. John Hobson, and Mr. Sam<sup>l</sup> Chandler, or any three of them, be a Committee fully Authorized and Impowered to Survey and lay out five more Tracts of land for Townships of the contents of Six miles Square each, in Some of the unappropriated Lands of this Province, and that the said Lands, together with the Two towns before granted, be granted and disposed of to the Officers and Souldiers who wear in the Narraganset war, or to their Lawfull Representatives as they are and have been Allowed by this Court, being Eight hundred and forty in number in the whole. And is in full Satisfaction of the Grant formerly made by the General Court as a reward for their Publick Services. And the Grantees shall be obliged to Assemble within as short a time as they Can Conveniently, not Exceeding the Space of Two months, and proceed to the Choyce of Committees respectively to Regulate Each propriety or Township which is to be held and Injoyed by one hundred and Twenty of the Grantees Each and in equal proportion, who Shall pass such Orders and Rules as will effectually oblige them To Settle Sixty Families at least in each Township with a Learned Orthodox Minister within the Space of



Seven years from the Date of this Grant; Provided always, that if the said Grantees Shall not Effectually Settle the said number of families in Each Township and also, lay out a Lott for the first Settled Minister, one for the Ministry, and one for the Schoole In Each of the said Townships, They shall have no advantage of but forfeit their Respective Grants, anything to the Contrary Contained notwithstanding. The Charge of the Survey to be paid by the Province.

"Sent up for Concurrence

J QUINCY Speaker

"In Council, July 4, 1732. Read and concured.

J. WILLARD Secr'y.

"April 26, 1733. Consented to.

J. BELCHER."

Thus it was, at the expiration of nearly six years after the Narragansett soldiers and their proper representatives first presented their claims to the provincial government, asking for grants of land in accordance with the promise made to them in good faith, as they believed, that those claims were allowed and their prayer answered.

**Assignment of Townships.** And now, having come into legal possession of the several townships conveyed and confirmed to them (though some of those townships had not yet been located), it was in order for the grantees to adopt, at their earliest convenience, such measures as were calculated to secure the fulfillment of the conditions on which their petitions had been granted. To this end, their standing committee convened on the very day upon which the governor affixed his signature to the last order of the general court, and, in connection with other less important items of business,

"*Voted*, that Samuel Kneeland [the clerk] make Seven Devisions of the Narraganset Grantees, each Devision to contain one hundred and twenty of the said Grantees and to place the said one hundred and twenty of each Devision as near as he can together.

"*Voted*, that he git all the Votes and Orders of the General Court relating to ye seven Townships granted to the Narraganset Soldiers, for Direction to this Committee's calling a Proprietors meeting.

"*Voted*, that Nath<sup>l</sup> Goodwin, Jonathan Williams, and Samuel Kneeland, draw up an Adver<sup>st</sup> for calling a Proprietors' Meeting s<sup>d</sup> Adver<sup>st</sup> to be laid before the Committee for there Apribation at there next meeting."

At that meeting, held May 3d, the advertisement was presented and approved, and Samuel Kneeland was directed to have it printed and sent to the several towns in which the grantees lived. He was also directed "to write a list of the grantees of each Town and send with the Adver<sup>ts</sup>."

At a meeting of the committee, held May 31st, it was

"*Voted*, That Samuel Kneeland wright a list for each Township granted according to the Devision now made by the Committee, in order to Divide the Grantees into seven Society's at their Aproaching meeting, the Said list to [be] laid before the Grantees for their Apribation."

The advertisement provided for in one of the preceding votes was sent as directed to the various towns of the province in which the grantees resided. It called for a meeting of the whole body on Boston Common the sixth day of the follow-





ing June. In pursuance thereof, the grantees assembled at that date. Before any business was transacted, the standing committee gave up "their Votes, the Account of their meetings, the lists, papers etc. by their Clark to the Grantees." The following report of the proceedings on that occasion is taken from the original records of the clerk, now in possession of Charles H. Campbell, Esq., of Nashua, N. H., the larger part of which was copied into the first book of the proprietors of Narragansett No. 2:

"Boston June 6, 1733. At a meeting of the Narragansett Grantees or the Narragansett Soldiers mett by an Adver<sup>t</sup> from their Committee Impowered to call Said Meeting by the Vote of s<sup>d</sup> Grantees upon Sept. 1, 1731.

"Voted, that Con<sup>l</sup> Thomas Toylston be Moderator of this meeting.

"Voted, that Samuel Kneeland be Clark to the Grantees at this meeting.

"Voted, that their be a Committee chosen to examine the late Committee's accounts and all the former accounts.

"Voted, that there be of this Committee Viz<sup>t</sup> Con<sup>l</sup> Benjamin Prescott Esq. John Richardson Esq. & Capt Joseph Ruggles be this Comtee.

"Adjourned at 2 O'Clock to meet in the Common of y<sup>e</sup> Towne of Boston."

"Two o'Clock in the afternoon. Att a meeting of the Narragansett Grantees mett by ajournment in the Common of the Town of Boston.

"Voted, that the Grantees Allowed by the General Court amounting to the number of Eight hundred and forty in the whole be Devided into Seven Distinct Societys, each Society Consist of One hundred and twenty of the said Grantees which society shall be Intituled to One of y<sup>e</sup> Townships granted to the Narragansett Soldiers, &c."

The meeting then proceeded to make the division indicated by this vote, naming the towns to which the members of each society belonged, and appointing committees to have charge of the affairs of each society, respectively. The method of procedure is shown by an extract from the records, pertaining directly to the purpose and character of the present work:

"Voted, that one of the said Societys shall Consist mostly of the Proprietors belonging to the Towns of Cambridge, Charlestown, Watertown, Westtown, Sudbury, Newtown, Medford, Maulding, Reding.

"Voted, that Mr. John Cutting of Watertown, Mr. James Lowden of Charlestown, and Capt Joseph Bowman of Watertown, be a Committee for the Said Society."

Having constituted the several societies of grantees corresponding to the number of townships to be distributed among them, it was thereafter, at the same meeting,

"Voted, That each of the Several Committees for the Respective Societies now chosen be Directed and Impowered to take a List of the Society for which they are Appointed and Joyne with the other Committees in Assigning the Townships to each Society &c. and also to assemble the Grantees of their Respective Societies to Chuse a Clark and Commitees from time to time to manage and Transact any Affairs that may be thought needfull and make such Rules and Orders as may be Proper and for the benefit of the Society and bringing forward the Settlement of the Township that shall be assigned them, as aforesaid.

"Voted that all past and the present charges of this meeting be paid by the wholl Society. Adjourned for one day."



June 7, 1733. The grantees met at Mr. Luke Verdey's, in Boston, and

*"Voted,* that y<sup>e</sup> Report of the Committee Chosen yesterday (to examine y<sup>e</sup> late Committees accounts and all former accounts) be accepted and the money Due being one hundred and Twenty-nine Pounds, Eleven Shillings and Eight pence be paid accordingly to the Several Persons to whom it is Due.

*"Voted,* that Deacon Jonathan Williams of Boston be Treasurer of the whole Narraganset Society or grantees, and it is further Ordered and Voted that y<sup>e</sup> Severial Societys pay their Proportionable part of the One Hundred and Twenty nine Pounds Eleven Shillings and Eight Pence (Due from the whole Society) to Deacon Jonathan Williams of Boston Treasurer and by him to be Repaid to the late Committee to whom it is Due to Discharge said Debt."

*"Voted,* that Samuel Kneeland be the Clark of the whole Narraganset Society or grantees and that he is Impowered by said Grantees to keep all the Records Papers Resolves and Votes of or belonging to the s<sup>d</sup> Grantees and that he give coppies to any of the grantees or Others, Attested under his hand, he being under an Oth for a faithful Discharge of his trust.

*"Voted,* that the Charges of this meeting being Seven pounds ten Shillings and Six pence, be paid by the Severial Societies to the Treasurer in the same method that other Debts are to be paid in."

This appears to have been the last meeting of the whole body of Narragansett grantees ever held. Their interests were duly entrusted to, and all business relating to their affairs was thereafter transacted by, the committees appointed to represent the several societies into which they had been divided, and the action of those committees was, in every instance, regarded as authoritative and final.

By request of Thomas Tilestone and others, committee of the society located in Boston and vicinity, an informal gathering of such members of the several committees as could be conveniently reached, was held in that town on the 7th of September, when it was decided to call a meeting of *all* the committees at the house of Mr. Luke Verdey on the 17th of October, next, at nine o'clock in the morning, for the purpose of making the proper assignments of the several townships to the different parties authorized to receive them, and the clerk was directed to issue notifications accordingly. Then adjourned to that date.

"Boston, Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>, 1733. According to Ajornment the Severall Committees for the Several Societies of the Narraganset Grantees being mett att the House of Mr. Luke Verdey att nine of the Clock in the morning Entered into Several Debates about assigning the Towns Granted by the Honorable the General Court to the said Grantees but not concluding upon any method to proceed upon. Adjorned to half an hour after Two in the afternoon to meet againe att said House. According to adjornment the Several Committees mett and reesumed their Debates and agreed that a Town Back of Saco and Scarbro be called No. 1, and that the Said Town be assigned to Mr. Philemon Dean and Company, a Committee for Ipswich Society &c.

"And then Voted, that the Committees for the other Six Societies Come into a Lott for the Six Remaining Towns being No. 2, No. 3, No. 4, No. 5, No. 6, No. 7. But before the Drawing the lotts a Proposall was made that





the Society that Should happen to Draw the Town Called No. 2 at Wetchutsett Should Lay out and Assigne to his Exelency Jonathan Belcher Esqr. Five hundred Acres of Land in Said Town for his Honored Father's Right, which proposal was Agreed upon and consented to by all the Committees present att Said meeting, and Voted and ordered accordingly. Then Voted that [one] of Each Committee Draw the Lott for Each Society and that Collo<sup>l</sup> John Chandler Draw for Barnstable Society [the committee of which was probably not present on the occasion].

"*Voted*, that the Six Towns be Assigned as by lot they wear Drawn (Viz.) To Mr. James Lowden and Company, No. 2 att Wetchutset. To Mr. Richard More and Company No. 3 att Sowheagan West. To Mr. Edward Shove and Company No. 4 att Amoskeage. To Collo<sup>l</sup> Thomas Tileston & Company No. 5 Sowheagan East. To Mr. Sam<sup>l</sup> Chandler and Company No. 6 west of Penny Cook and Sun Cook. To Collo<sup>l</sup> Goreham and Company No. 7 to Lay out."

By an examination of the records of the general court, it appears that at the time this meeting was held only two of the seven towns granted to the Narragansett soldiers had been reported to the legislature, accepted and confirmed to the grantees. These were the ones subsequently designated as No. 2 and No. 3, upon which action was taken as heretofore stated, Dec. 18, 1728. Of the other five, plans for two, Nos. 1 and 7, were submitted and approved Feb. 11, 1733-4; for two others, Nos. 5 and 6, Feb. 12th; and for the last, No. 4, Feb. 26th. This tract was situated "att Amos Keag," and represented the present town of Goffstown, N. H. But, in 1736, the proprietors into whose possession it had come in the general assignment petitioned the court for a change of location on the ground that "they found the land so poor and barren as to be altogether incapable of making a settlement." The legislature deemed their request reasonable, and appropriated, in lieu of the surrendered territory, a corresponding township in what is now Hampshire County. For a similar reason, Samuel Chandler and company were permitted to exchange the tract first assigned them for one "on the back of Rutland."

Of the seven grants of land, concerning which this chapter treats, No. 1 was finally incorporated under the name of Buxton, Me.; No. 2, Westminster; No. 3, Amherst, N. H., including parts of what is now Merrimac, Milford, and Mount Vernon; No. 4, Greenwich, with a large outlying tract at Chesterfield and Goshen; No. 5, Bedford, N. H.; No. 6, Templeton; No. 7, Gorham, Me.

Here ends the story of the Narragansett townships in their collective capacity, and of the doings of the Narragansett grantees, so far as they acted together, either as one body or through their proper representatives. At this point, each society or division into which they were grouped, having received its duly assigned lands, enters upon its own separate and independent existence, whose subsequent experiences and proceedings form a part of the history of the towns they founded, as finally incorporated, respectively; to which the reader is hereby referred for further information concerning them.





## CHAPTER V.

### NARRAGANSETT NO. 2.

#### NAMES OF GRANTEES—FIRST MEETING—ORGANIZATION— PREPARATIONS FOR SETTLEMENT.

THE town of Westminster, previous to its incorporation under its present name, in 1759, was called, as already suggested, Narragansett No. 2. In the general distribution of townships among the several societies or companies, into which the eight hundred and forty approved claimants for lands, under the pledge given to the soldiers in King Philip's War, had been divided, No. 2 was assigned to the one represented by John Cutting of Watertown, James Lowden of Charlestown, and Joseph Bowman of Watertown. The names of the persons belonging to this section are given in the following table, the several towns where they respectively resided being duly indicated. The figures show the number of the original home lot drawn by the persons against whose names they stand, while a star is used to designate such still surviving soldiers as were personally engaged in the "Swamp Fight" of Dec. 19, 1675.

#### "GRANTEES OF NARRAGANSETT No. 2.

##### CAMBRIDGE.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 107. *William Russell.   | 21. Samuel Smith, for his uncle, Samuel.                         |
| 77. *Gershom Cutter.   |  |
| 104. Joseph Beamos, for his father, Joseph.                    | 49. Heirs of Joseph Smith.                                       |
| 52. Jonathan Remington, Esqr. for his father, Capt. Remington. | 43. Heirs of Nathaniel Smith.                                    |
| 14. Downing Champney, for his father, Samuel.                  | 87. Heirs of Thomas Brown.                                       |
| 56. Jonathan Bathrick, for his father, Thomas.                 | 120. Jonathan Gates, for his father, Simon.                      |
| 36. Peter Hay, for his brother-in-law, John Barrel.            | 100. Thomas Wellington, for his uncle, John.                     |
| 63. William Gleason, for his father, William.                  | 112. William Brattle, Esqr. for his grandfather, Thomas Brattle. |
| 1. Heirs of John Smith.  | 96. Daniel Cheavor, for his uncle, James Cheavor.                |

##### CHARLESTOWN.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 64. *James Lowden.                       | 80. Thomas Skinner, for his uncle, Isaac Lewis. |
| 110. *Samuel Read.                       |   |
| 99. *Henery Sumers.                      | 26. Samuel Foskit, for his father, Samuel.      |
| 10. Robert Fosket, for his father, John. | 62. Samuel Long, for his uncle, Samuel Newell.  |



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 85. Magry Dowse, for her father,<br>Joseph.                | 5. Thomas Welche's heirs.                              |
| 60. Nathaniel Goodwin, for his<br>uncle, Benjamin Lathrop. | 61. George Grind's heirs.                              |
| 70. James Smith's heir, namely,<br>Jonathan Call.          | 105. Joseph Lind's heirs.                              |
| 111. Joseph Pratt's heirs.                                 | 30. Timothy Cuttler's heirs.                           |
| 92. Samuel Lemmon's heirs.                                 | 90. James Kittle, for his father.                      |
| 69. William Burt's heirs.                                  | 117. Thomas Genner's heirs.                            |
| 54. Jacob Cole's heirs.                                    | 66. John Griffin, heir to Matthew<br>Griffin.          |
| 20. John Mousley's heirs.                                  | 17. Ebenezer Breed, for his father,<br>John.           |
| 106. Humphrey Miller's heirs.                              | 118. Zechariah Davis, for his uncle,<br>Hopstil Davis. |
| 89. John Hawkins' heirs.                                   | 119. John Sprague, for his father,<br>Jonathan.        |
| 113. John Trumbul's heirs.                                 | 4. Elezer Johnson, for his father,<br>Edward.          |
| 9. Alexander Phillips' heirs.                              | 39. John Senter, for his father,<br>John.              |
| 83. George Mudge's heirs.                                  |  |
| 47. John Shepherd's heirs.                                 |  |

## WATERTOWN.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 68. John Sawen, for his father,<br>Thomas.              | 116. Joseph Ball, for his uncle,<br>Jacob Bullard.                    |
| 101. *Ephraim Cutter.                                   | 28. Thomas Herrington, for his<br>wife's father, Timothy<br>Rice.     |
| 74. Jonas Cutting, for his father,<br>James.            | 19. John Sherman, for his uncle,<br>John.                             |
| 115. *John Barnard.                                     | 16. Capt. Joseph Bowman, for his<br>wife's uncle, James Barn-<br>ard. |
| 12. *Joshua Biglow.                                     | 103. Joseph Smith, for his father,<br>Joseph.                         |
| 53. *William Shattuck.                                  | 18. Richard Beirs, for his father,<br>Elnathan.                       |
| 72. Joseph Grout, for his father,<br>Joseph Grout.      | 102. Michael Flag's heirs.  |
| 22. Zachariah Smith, for his father,<br>Jonathan Smith. | 55. Capt. Joseph Bowman, for his<br>wife's father, John Barnard.      |
| 25. Samuel Hager, for his uncle,<br>John Hager.         | 45. John Cutting, for his father,<br>John Cutting.                    |
| 23. George Herrington's heirs.                          | 73. Heirs of Dr. Wellington.  |
| 48. *John Herrington.                                   | 82. Heirs of Benjamin Wellington.                                     |
| 91. Joseph Priest, for his father,<br>Joseph.           |   |
| 86. *Zechariah Cutting.                                 |   |
| 109. John Bright, for his uncle, John.                  |   |
| 97. George Pameter, for his<br>father, William.         |   |

## WESTON.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 51. Ebenezer Boynton, for his<br>wife's father, Caleb Grant. | 44. Thomas Cory, for his father,<br>Thomas.         |
| 81. Oneseophorus Pike, for his<br>father, James Pike.        | 37. Nathaniel Norcross, for Jere-<br>miah Norcross. |
|  | 34. *Daniel Warren.                                 |

## SUDBURY.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 59. *Mathew Gibbs.                              | 84. *John Adams.                                  |
| 67. Richard Taylor, for his father,<br>Richard. | 15. Benjamin Pameter, for his<br>brother, Joseph. |
| 114. Thomas Taylor, for his father,<br>Sebred.  | 40. Joseph Rutter, for his father,<br>Thomas.     |
| 29. *John Marston.                              | 41. Ebenezer Graves, for his<br>father, Joseph.   |
| 75. John Parkhurst, for his father,<br>John.    | 98. John More, for his father,<br>Joseph.         |
| 70. *Dennis Hedly.                              |   |





## NEWTOWN.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 42. Edward Jackson, for his father, Seborn.      | 35. John Park, for his father, John.         |
| 50. *Nathaniel Haly.                             | 78. Jonathan Willard, for his father, Jacob. |
| 93. Isaac Beech, for his brother, Richard Beech. | 108. Heirs of Capt. Thomas Prentice.         |
| 3. *Stephen Cook.                                |  |

## MEDFORD.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 58. William Willis, for his father, Thomas. | 76. John Whitmore, for his father, John. |
| 38. John Hall, for Capt. Seill.             |  |

## MALDEN.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 7. *John Mudge.                               | 32. James Cheak's heirs.                            |
| 6. Samuel Kneeland, asine to Phinias Upham.   | 79. John Winslow, for his father, John.             |
| 65. Abraham Skinner, for his father, Abraham. | 57. William Willis, for the heirs of John Bachelor. |

## REDING.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 94. Nathaniel Parker, for his uncle, Jonathan. | 71. Samuel Lampson, for his father, Samuel. |
| 46. Richard Brown, for his uncle, Edmon.       | 24. Thomas Hodgman's heirs.                 |
| 13. *Thomas Nichols.                           | 33. Richard Upham, for his father, Phinias. |
| 27. Major Swain's heirs.                       | 11. Samuel Chandler, for William Jones.     |
| 31. Benjamin Davises heirs.                    | 88. Isaac Willman's heirs."                 |
| 2. Samuel Demmon.                              |   |

The above list contains the names of one hundred and nineteen persons. They were, to begin with, owners in common of all the lands of Narragansett No. 2, and all affairs pertaining thereto were managed by them in their associated capacity, until a proper division and distribution of interests, as hereafter detailed, had been effected. In order to provide for such division and distribution, with a view to an early settlement of the territory, and for the purpose of transacting such other items of business as might be deemed important or desirable, the committee previously chosen to represent and act for this particular branch or society of the whole body of grantees, issued, at an early day after the assignment of the several townships had taken place, the following

## "ADVERTISEMENT.

"These are to notify the Grantees or proprietors of the second Township, Viz: No. Two at Wachusett, that they meet at the House of Mr. Samuel Smith at Cambridge in Menotomy, Monday on the third Day of December next at ten of the Clock in the forenoon. In order to Choose a Clark and Comtee or Comtees if they see cause to do and Transact such things as shall be needful for the furtherance of the Settlement of Said Town.

"Dated at Charlestown, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>, 1733.

JOHN CUTTING, }  
JAMES LOWDEN, } Comtee."  
JOSEPH BOWMAN, }



Pursuant to the terms of the above advertisement, a meeting of the grantees or proprietors (as the associate owners were usually afterwards called) was held at the time and place designated.

Capt. Joseph Bowman was chosen moderator of the meeting, and William Willis was elected proprietors' clerk.

A committee of three persons, to be known as "the Standing Committee," was chosen "for the calling of Proprietors Meetings from time to time as there Shall be occasion, and also for the managing the prudential affaires of the Propriety that may be necessary and proper att all Times." This committee consisted of Capt. Joseph Bowman, Mr. John Cutting, and Mr. James Lowden. At an adjourned meeting it was increased to five persons, Capt. Ebenezer Breed and Mr. Samuel Trumbull being added to the original number.

John Griffin, John Whitmore, Jonathan Willard, Nathaniel Parker, and Zechariah Smith were made a committee "to lay out and Devid the sd Township according to such Orders and directions as shall hereafter be given by the Propriety."

At an adjourned meeting, held Dec. 17th, it was made to appear that sundry persons "presumed to vote on one and the same Right to the disturbance and prejudice of the propriety"; whereupon it was "voted that the Standing Committee be Impowered to Inquire into Said affaire and determine who Shall vote for the futor on any Respective Right wher any Such dispute shall arise." It was also

*"Voted,* that there be Sixty acres of Land at least laid out in Each of the Lotts laid out in the first Division in Said Township.

*"Voted,* that the said Committee Appointed for laying out Said Division of Lotts be Impowered in such places where the Land is not so good and valuable to Equelise Said Lotts by laying the Larger quantity of acres therto According to the best of their discretion.

*"Voted,* that the principle part of the medows in Said Township are not to be Included in any of the Lotts of this first Division. Only In Such places where they Cannot be left out without Too great prejudice; it is Left to the discretion of the Committee to Judge and do accordingly.

*"Voted,* that if ther happen to be any Ceeder Swamp or Swamps in said Township they shall be Excluded [from] said Division."

At another adjourned meeting, held a week later at the house of Mr. Joseph Beans [Bemis] in Cambridge, reference was made to the vote of the whole body of Narragansett grantees, when the assignment of townships took place, "that the Society that should happen to Draw the Township No. 2 att Wetchutset should Lay out and Assigne to His Exelency, Jonathan Belcher, Esqr. Five Hundred Acres of Land for his Honored Father's Right." In view of that action, it was

*"Voted,* that his Exelency's Right of five hundred Acres aforesaid shall be laid out and assigned Together in one place According to the above said vote by the proprietors Committee appointed to Lay out the first Division of Lotts in said Township, where it will be for his Exelency's Reasonable Advantage and without too great prejudice to the Town."



At the same meeting six more persons were added to the standing committee, viz.: Benjamin Brown, Maj. Wm. Brattle, Benjamin Pemberton, Edward Jackson, Capt. John Hall, and Nathaniel Norcross. After which it was

*"Voted,* that the Standing Committee shall have full power to give directions to the Deviding Committee in their laying out sd<sup>d</sup> Township that may be needfull for them and also to act and Transact whatsoever may be needfull for the good of the propriety, By Levying a Tax on the Propriety if they think it needfull. And also to make Applycation to the Great and General Court att any time and in any affaires they shall apprehend necessary and advantageous to said Propriety.

*"Voted,* that if att any time hereafter Ten or more of the proprietors Shall Signifie under their Hands in writing to the Standing Committee their Desire of a meeting of the Propriety Signifying also for what End and purpose they desire the same. That then the Said Committee Shall forthwith Notifie and Call a meeting of the Propriety accordingly; And further when the Deviding Commite have perfected the first Devition they shall make Report to the Standing Commite of their Proceedings that the Propriety may be called together Draw their Lotts and pay in all Past Charge and give further Directions for an after Devition.

*"Voted,* that before the Proprietors Shall Draw their Respective Lotts of the first Devition, Each Respective Proprietor Shall pay his full proportion of all the Charges that have arisen or Shall arise both of our Committees and Proprietors meetings since the Sixth Day of June last Att which time we became a distinkt Society—And also all Such Charges as Shall arise in laying out and Deviding the first Divition of Lotts in Said Township."

William Willis, who had been previously elected clerk of the propriety, was at this meeting sworn to the faithful discharge of the duties of the office. He was also chosen treasurer "To receive and pay out the propriety's money according to the order of the Standing Committee, and took the corresponding oath."

Having thus become duly organized as a corporate body to all intents and purposes, and having, in a general way, laid out the work to be done at an early date and put the management of affairs into the hands of a competent committee, the proprietors of Narragansett No. 2 dissolved their first meeting.

The standing committee, recognizing its responsibility, at once entered upon the execution of the trusts confided to its keeping. Four days after the last meeting of the proprietors, on the 28th of December, 1733, its members convened at the house of Captain Bunker, in Charlestown, and established the following order, to be observed by the committee appointed to make the first division of the lands of the township.

- "1. A farm of five hundred acres for His Excellency, Jonathan Belcher.
- "2. A site for a Meeting-house with sufficient land adjacent for a training-field and a burying-place—the whole not to exceed ten acres.
- "3. A lot (of Sixty acres) for the first settled minister.
- "4. A similar lot for the support of the ministry.
- "5. A lot for the support of Schools.
- "6. A lot for each of the Proprietors agreeably to their vote."





The committee also voted that William Willis be employed "as Surveyor in said work" (though for some unexplained reason this was not done), and empowered the dividing committee "to provide such other Assistance as they may think most Benifitiall to the Propriety," and to proceed in their work "as soone as may be and the season will allow." The dividing committee was further authorized "when they shall Enter on their work" "To Erect a Convenient House to secure them from the Injuries of the weather att the Cost and Charge of the proprietic." The money then in the treasury was put at the service and made subject to the order of the same committee. Mr. Benjamin Pemberton, Capt. Joseph Bowman, and Capt. Ebenezer Breed, were chosen "to apply themselves to the Great and General Court" "for further time in which to settle the Township" "to gett our List [of claimants] Rectified and sett in Order," and "to act in any other affairs they may judge for the benefit of the propriety."

A meeting of the standing committee was held at the same place, Jan. 21, 1733-4, at which a tax of twenty shillings (\$3.33) on each particular right in the township, was levied, to be paid to the proprietors' treasurer on or before the fourteenth day of February next, and collectors were appointed in each of the towns where any of the proprietors resided, to receive the same and make payment accordingly.

On the same day, Zechariah Smith and Edward Jackson made an offer "to Erect a house in the said Township for the use of the propriety twenty two foot long Sixteen foot wide and Seven foot Stud, the Body of said House to be built with Square Timber with a framed Roofe and Covered with Long Shingles with good flours petitions and Doors, with a good Stone Chimney to s<sup>d</sup> House and to find and provide all meteerials for the Same att their own Cost and Charge Except Such Timber and Stone as The said Township Doth afford which they have Liberty to take and Improve for said work, and to Compleat and finish the Same on or before the Fifteenth Day of April next Ensuing. And this for the sum of Twenty Seven Pounds to be paid as followeth, that is, Ten Pounds part thereof in Hand and Seventeen Pounds the Remainder thereof when the said House is finished as aforesaid workmanlike."

Pursuant to which it was

*"Voted,* that the Commite Accept the offer and accordingly Do hearby agree with the said Smith and Jackson to Erect a House on s<sup>d</sup> township of the dementions and upon the conditions of the offer afore written.

*"Voted,* that the Treasurer forthwith pay unto the said Smith and Jackson the sum of *Eight* Pounds in part Towards and for the building of said [house] and also the other nineteen pounds when the said House is finished and Accepted by the Deviding Comitee."

At a meeting of the standing committee held on the 26th of the same month, Samuel Chandler of Concord, as chairman of



a committee of the general court, appointed, in response to a petition in regard to claimants of rights before alluded to, was present for the purpose of taking account of any errors existing in the list of grantees for the township, that the same might be rectified by the proper authority. On the 30th day of April a resolve, passed by the provincial legislature, was received, and was extended in full upon the records of the clerk of the propriety. It established a rule for determining who were rightful claimants or grantees under the act conveying lands to the Narragansett soldiers, enabling each and every propriety to rectify and perfect its own list of members, without difficulty or delay. It also fixed the date from which the seven years allowed for the settlement of the several townships, was to be reckoned at the first of June next, 1734, making the expiration of that time to occur June 1, 1741.

May 21, 1734, the committee for making the first division of the township reported to the standing committee, then in session at Captain Bunker's, that they had finished the work of laying out the lands, as ordered by the propriety, and according to the orders duly given them. At a subsequent meeting, held May 28th, Joseph Wilder, Esq., and Capt. Jonas Houghton, who appear to have been the surveyors employed in "laying out" the township, having presented an imperfect plan of the same as divided by them, were ordered "to complete it, making it as intelligible as maybe, and convey the same to the proprietor's Clerk as soon as they can with Convenience." This order was duly executed, and the plan prepared by these gentlemen and lodged in the hands of the clerk, has been preserved until the present day. Though much worn and defaced, it is sufficiently "intelligible" still to enable the writer to reproduce it substantially as it was at the outset and to construct a copy of it, much reduced in size, for this work. To that copy the reader is referred for information in regard to the original configuration of the township, the form of the lots, the location of the different numbers in their order and other important details relating thereto.

It was also voted at this meeting "to allow the Dividing Committee five shillings per day for the time spent by them in attending the meetings of the Standing Committee, and also the accounts presented by them for services rendered in the discharge of the duties for which they were appointed. An account of William Willis was also allowed and "Captain Breed Captain Bowman and Deacon Brown were nominated and chosen" "to assist the Clerk in preparing accounts and all matters necessary in order to Drawing the Lotts of the first Division at the next proprietors' meeting."

The following extract from the clerk's records explains itself.

"Voted to allow Mr Edward Jackson and Mr Zechariah Smith Thirty Pounds in Lue of the Twenty Seven pounds agreed for they having mad it





appear they wear loosers by building the House att Wetchutset according to the Bargaine made with the aforesaid Commitee."

This house, the first erected in the township, was located on the swell of land at the northeast extremity of Meeting-house Pond, in the rear probably of the former Baptist parsonage, recently owned and occupied by Mr. Jacob Sawin.

At a meeting of the standing committee, June 11, 1734, in response to a petition of Joshua Bigelow and others, it was

"Voted that a proprietors meeting be called and appointed on the Second Tuesday of July next and that Notifications be sent out accordingly."

Pursuant to this vote, the clerk issued the following

#### "ADVERTISEMENT.

"These are to notifie all the proprietors of the Narraganset Township North of Wetchutset hill number Two, to assemble att the House of Mrs. Mary Larnard in Watertown on tusday the ninth Day of July next at nine of the Clock in the fournoone To Consider and conclude on the following Articles, Viz:—

"1. To hear and adjust the accompts of the Commitee that have been concerned in managing the affairs of the said Propriety and for laying out the Lotts in sd Township and all other Charges that have Arisen and other Charges that may be thought proper to allow att said meeting and to defray the Same which Charges to Each Proprietor according to Computation will be four pounds.

"2. To hear and Determine when any dispute may arise amonge the heirs of any of the Grantees deceased, according to the Resolve of the General Court.

"3. To consider and conclude in what way they will Draw their Lotts and to Draw them as they Shall then agree.

"4. To consider and conclude how to lay out ways in said Township.

"5. To conclude how to relieve any persons that may be uneasy with their Draughts.

"6. To consider and conclude on any thing or things that may be thought proper att said meeting.

"In the name and by order of the Commitee.

"Charlstown June 11 1734. WILLIAM WILLIS proprietors Clerk."

The standing committee held a meeting a week previous to that of the proprietors announced above, and "voted that Mr. James Lowden, Capt. Bowman, and Mr. John Cutting, the First Commitee of this Society, prepare their accompts as Soone as may be Referring to what they have Received of the proprietors money and likewise of their Disbursements and Commit the same to the proprietors' Clerk in order to the whole Accompts being prepared to be Layed before the propriety at the next meeting," July 9, 1734. The Proprietors convened as notified and organized by the choice of Capt. Joseph Bowman, Moderator. A committee consisting of Mr. John Sherman, Capt. Samuel Jackson, and Mr. Samuel Kneeland, was chosen "to audit the accounts of the former committees and other persons to whom the Propriety is indebted" and Maj. William Brattle, Mr.



Benjamin Brown, Mr. Samuel Kneeland, Mr. Samuel Chandler, and William Willis were appointed "to hear such persons who shall dispute the Title to any of the Rights in said Township or with Respect to the Charges in bringing forward or proving their Claimes to Such Rights," both committees being instructed to report at an adjourned meeting.

At the afternoon session it was

*"Voted,* that if any of the proprietors shall be dissatisfied with their draft Lotts in said Township he or they shall or may, upon his or their Relinquishing the said lott or lotts to the propriety, have liberty within Two years from this time at his own Cost and Charge to survey and lay out in leue thereof, Sixty acres of the undivided Land in said Township Exclusive of meadow, and in a Regular forme not exceeding half a mile in length, and to make return of such their Doing to the Proprietors Committee for the time being for their Acceptance.

*"Voted,* that Each proprietor Shall pay to the Treasurer in Bills of Credit so much as shall make up the Credit they already have with the Treasurer the sume of foure Pounds before they shall Draw any of their Respective Lotts."

The lots were then prepared for drawing by Major Brattle, Captain Jackson, and Mr. Benjamin Brown, a committee designated for that purpose. Before proceeding with the draft, however, lot No. 8 (extending from the old common half a mile in a southwest direction along the west side of the pond) was set apart and assigned to the first settled minister of the township, and No. 95 (located directly northwest of the Cowee place, now owned by Isaac N. Smith) was set apart as a ministerial lot, for the benefit of the ministry of the town. It was furthermore agreed that the Governor's Farm, so called, as laid out by the dividing committee, consisting of five hundred acres, and sixteen acres additional, to be reserved and used for highways at the discretion of the proprietors, be set apart and confirmed to His Excellency, Jonathan Belcher, as before provided for.

This farm lay beyond the second range of lots, on the southwest side of the central village street, and extended from a little west of Mrs. Julia A. Foster's residence nearly to the late Orange Young place, including South Westminster Village, the farms formerly belonging to James and John Sawin, Abraham Sampson and George Adams, Joseph and Luke Sawin, Aaron Derby, and Horace B. Knowler, with contiguous lands. It was in rectangular form, three hundred and forty-four rods long by two hundred and forty rods wide.

It was furthermore agreed before the drawing began, that the house erected by order of the proprietors on lot No. 1 should be for their own convenience and use for seven years from date, and that afterward it should belong to the particular proprietor who should draw that lot. The doings of the dividing committee in general were approved, and also the allowance of two acres in each lot for highways, and the reservation of land between certain lots and ranges of lots for the same purpose;



and it was ordered that all such allowances and reservations "should be and remain for that use forever."

The proprietors present at this meeting, and the representatives of others who were absent, then proceeded to draw their respective lots in accordance with the foregoing votes. Those unrepresented, either in person or by proxy, were permitted to attend to that duty at an adjourned meeting, held Sept. 3d following, at which date the whole work was completed. The result is indicated in the list of grantees heretofore given.\*

With the result of the drawing of the "First Division Lots," often called "Home Lots," the proprietors were generally satisfied. Five of them, however, claimed the privilege accorded by a vote of the proprietors, passed July 9th, of throwing up the lots drawn by them and of locating elsewhere. These were Nathaniel Parker, who had drawn No. 94, formerly the Spaulding place, but recently owned by Mr. Lyman Seaver; Mr. Joseph Lynde, who had drawn, on the right of John Winslow, No. 79, lying south of the residence of Mr. Charles F. Knower and never built upon; Mr. Jonathan Willard, who drew No. 78, adjoining the last upon the southeast and lying on both sides of the central road to Hubbardston, originally built upon by Benjamin Bellows but more recently known as the Robbins place; Nathaniel Appleton, who received No. 107, on which is now located the business part of Wachusettville; and Captain Jackson, who had drawn, on the right of Captain Prentice's heirs, No. 108, the lot where now stands the farm buildings of Messrs. Benjamin Wyman and Samuel H. Sprague. These several persons, after surrendering the lots specified, selected a series lying contiguous to each other in the north part of the township, on the northerly slope of Bean Porridge Hill, which was duly assigned and confirmed to them respectively by vote of the propriety. The surrendered lots, with the exception of No. 94, which was, at a later date, set apart and reserved for the benefit of the schools of the township and known as the school lot, were afterwards disposed of by sale to other parties.

At the proprietors' meeting, Sept. 3d, held per adjournment from July 9th, the auditing committee made a report of the finan-

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\* NOTE. By some inadvertance or oversight there were two lots numbered 70 in the plan of the township submitted by the dividing committee's surveyors, making one hundred and twenty-one in all, which are duly accounted for in the final assignment,—one going to the first minister, one to the ministry, and one to each of the one hundred and nineteen grantees, as shown in the table referred to. One of the lots bearing the number named, sometimes called "the right 70," was located directly south of and adjoining the former John C. Miller place, now owed by Mr. George W. Peeler. The other was the lot on which stood the buildings of Doctor Liverpool, formerly a part of the John Heywood farm. In the proprietor's records this lot is indicated as "No. 70 I. H.," the letters being enigmatical to the author of this work.





cial standing of the propriety, which was accepted. According to that report there had been

Received from 119 proprietors, £4 each . . . .	£476 0 0
Paid bills of standing committee . . . .	£82 17s 11d
“ “ “ dividing . . . .	82 18
“ “ “ surveyors . . . .	69 13
“ for building house . . . .	30
“ bills of sundry persons . . . .	83 18 2
Cash on hand . . . .	126 12 11
Total . . . . .	£476 0 0

The committee chosen to consider the claims of different parties to certain original rights in the township reported. Twelve cases of double claimants for the same right had been examined and judgment passed upon them. The report was accepted and the decision of the committee in each instance was approved and confirmed.

Sept. 24, 1734. A new standing committee consisting of three persons, Capt. Joseph Bowman, Capt. Samuel Jackson, and Samuel Kneeland, was chosen and instructed to issue a call for meetings of the proprietors thereafter “on request of ten or more of them expressed in writing over their own signatures, signifying also for what reason they desire the same.”

Everything in the new township of Narragansett No. 2 was now ready for a settlement within its borders, and it was of considerable importance to the proprietors that the work of taking up and improving the lands, building houses, and establishing families there, should begin at as early a date as possible. The conditions upon which the original grant was made by the general court, and upon which every proprietor held his title to his share in it, were that sixty families should be settled within seven years from the date thereof, that is, before June 15, 1735, which time had been extended to June 1, 1741. But people did not seem anxious to leave their comfortable homes in well-established communities, with neighbors and friends close about them, and take up their abode in the wilderness, far away from such advantages and enjoyments, amid privations, discomforts, and dangers of many a kind and name. Moreover, the openings for settlements were too many and presented too great a diversity of claims and attractions for any of them to be filled with great rapidity. Special endeavors and inducements were therefore found necessary in each case, in order to secure the desired result in this behalf. The proprietors of Narragansett No. 2 deemed it wise to take some definite action in the matter at an early day. A call was therefore issued in proper form, for a meeting to be held on the 24th of March, 1735, at the house of John Bradshaw, Esq., in Medford, to act upon the following articles:



"1. To Consider and conclude upon some method that will be Effectual to encourage and oblige Sixty of the proprietors to Settle their Lotts in such a Space of time as the proprietors shall agree upon.

"2. To Consider and conclude what method will be Best to proceed in Respectin their Highways and building bridges.

"3. To Consider and conclude upon some method to build a Saw-mill in said Town.

"4. To Consider whether the Proprietors will agree upon any way or method that they may Come to the Knoledge of their medows in said Town and come to the devition thereof.

"5. Also to consider and conclude upon any other thing or things that may be thought proper to act upon att said meeting."

At the meeting convened pursuant to this notice, it was

*"Voted*, that the propriety will Endeavor to Settle Sixty familys on the said Township within foure years from the Grant thereof by the General Court [meaning, undoubtedly, June 1 1734], and also that Each of the proprietors that shall settle as aforesaid Shall Erect and build a house not less than Eighteen foot long Sixteen foot wide and Seven foot stud and well covered, and likewise to Clear and fence Three acres of Land fitt for mowing or Plowing within the time above Limmited."

No other business of importance was transacted. At an adjourned session, held the second Tuesday of May (13th) following, it was

*"Voted*, that, in consideration of Maj. William Brattle of Cambridge his building a Saw-mill on his lott in the Narraganset Township No. 2, by March 1736 & Keeping the same in good Repaire for twenty years next ensuing, Twelve acres of the undevided meadow or Swamp Land nighest to the said Maj. Brattle's lot now and hereby is Granted to the said Maj. Brattle and his heirs forever, He being at the Charge of Laying out said Lott, and giving a five hundred pound [Bond] for the Erecting and Continuing of said mill for the term of Twenty years aforesaid.

*"Voted*, that Maj. Wm. Brattle and his Heirs for ever have liberty to flow all the meadow above said Brattle's lott for the conveniency of said mill from the last of September to the tenth of April from year to year.

*"Voted*, and *Ordered*, that the first fifteen proprietors who shall appear and enter their names with the Clerk or such other person as the propriety shall appoint and give Bond to the value of fifty pounds, with a sufficient Surty or Surties to performe and fullfill the following Articles viz: that each of the said proprietors shall att or before the last Day of September next which will be in the year 1736, Erect a dwelling House on Each of their Respective lotts in said Township (of the dimensions before stated with cleared land adjoining) and shall personally continue to dwell there themselves and families, if such they have untill the terme perfixt by the Great and General Court for the settling of said Township be fulfilled. That then there shall be paide to Each of the aforesaid fifteen proprietors upon their giving Bond as aforesaid the sume of Twelve pounds [\$40] out of the Treasury of said propriety."

By a corresponding vote, the clerk, William Willis, was authorized to take the bonds provided for, and to pay the bounty specified in each case. In order to meet the demand, which by these votes might be made upon the treasury, a tax of one hundred and eighty pounds, in the aggregate, was ordered, payable on or before the date named, and the standing committee





was instructed to take measures for carrying this vote into effect, collectors in each town being appointed to receive and pay in the several assessments required.

A year passed by and nothing had been accomplished in the way of settling the township. The fifteen proprietors whom it was hoped the bounty of twelve pounds would induce to come forward, accept the offer, and locate on their lots, did not respond. Time was hurrying on. There was danger that the lands would be forfeited by non-compliance with the terms upon which they had been received. No doubt some of the interested parties were becoming anxious in view of the situation,—anxious to have the required settlement made, but not anxious to assume the responsibility—the toil, the privation, the risk, the sacrifice to themselves.

Another meeting of the proprietors was therefore called for the 2d day of June, 1736, to take further action towards the forwarding of the end in view. A vote similar to that of the year before was passed,—the difference being in increasing the number of families required to settle from fifteen to sixty, in extending the time of such settlement from September, 1736, to June, 1738, in reducing the amount of the bounty from twelve pounds to ten, and in fixing the term of continued occupancy of land at three years. The necessary supplementary votes were also passed.

Time went on. As no fifteen families came forward under the former vote, to constitute a settlement, so no sixty families appeared for the same purpose under the latter. The year 1736 expired and the wilds of Narragansett No. 2 were as wild as ever, and as tenantless, so far as actual residents were concerned. One house, lone and desolate, stood within its boundaries. The sawmill of Major Brattle had probably been erected early in the season, at the head of the Narrows, where the dam of the Wachusettville reservoir is now located, although there is no record of the fact. And these were all the signs and tokens of civilized life apparent in the township. Otherwise one wide wilderness, an unbroken forest covered all its hills and dales, extending eastward to Lunenburg and Lancaster, southward to Rutland, westward as far as Petersham, which had been colonized two or three years before, and northward indefinitely,—the home of wild beasts and a great variety of small game, of insect tribes, denizens of the ponds and streams, and birds of the air, but not of civilized man.

1737 opened. The eventful year had come,—the year of the town's birth, the year in which Narragansett No. 2 was to have a "local habitation," as well as "a name," and be an accomplished *fact* as well as a corporate *factor*, in due time, of New England history and of New England civilization.

The first actual settler in the township was undoubtedly Mr. Fairbanks Moor, from Lancaster, a lineal descendant of one



John Moor, who, coming from England, located in Sudbury, in 1640, and whose son, "Ensign" John Moor, was an early inhabitant and influential citizen of Lancaster, and the grandfather of the pioneer resident on the territory of Westminster. There are no known data by which the exact day of Mr. Moor's arrival in the place can be determined. According to the best evidence that has been obtained upon the matter, however, he arrived "in town" early in the month of March, in the year mentioned, and made a beginning upon lot No. 19, where Mr. Hobart Raymond now resides. This lot he had purchased nearly a year before of John Sherman of Watertown, an original proprietor. For a little while Mr. Moor was sole inhabitant here, "monarch of all he surveyed." Before the expiration of the month, it is understood that he was joined by Mr. Joseph Holden of Watertown, son of Justinian Holden, the immigrant, who was in that place in 1634. Mr. Holden located on lot No. 1, adjoining that of Mr. Moor, on which the Baptist meetinghouse formerly stood, he having bought it the previous autumn of Benjamin Pemberton of Boston. And these two men, dwelling together here in the wilderness, working side by side to make a clearing and to build a home for themselves and theirs, occupying, no doubt, at first the proprietors' house, which chanced to stand on Mr. Holden's land, constituted the beginning,—the nucleus of the settlement from which, and around which, has grown and gathered all that has appeared and transpired here during the past one hundred and fifty years.

Nothing is known, or is ever likely to be known, of the circumstances attending the almost simultaneous appearance of these two men upon this territory. Singularly enough, the proprietors' records contain no account, no *hint* even, of the important event. A multitude of inquiries relating to it rush upon the thought, but they can be answered only by conjecture. It would be exceedingly gratifying to find out how these men made the journey to their newly chosen abiding place in the wilderness. Did they come hither on foot, bringing with them such articles of convenience and use as their strength would allow, or with teams? Had they previous acquaintance with each other, and a mutual understanding in regard to the new settlement, or did they meet as strangers when they gave each other greeting near the borders of Meetinghouse Pond on that unknown day of March, 1737? These and other questions pertaining to their first experiences and mode of life at the outset, suggest themselves spontaneously, but there is no reply for them. The most that can be said is that the men were here, and that they were here *to stay*:—Mr. Moor for a few years only, however, but Mr. Holden permanently, dying on the estate where he first located, in 1776, full of years and honors.

These pioneer settlers were in the township, as stated, in March, 1737, taking a fresh start in life and opening the way





for others coming after them. In June, it is understood, the frames of their future dwellings were raised, both the same day. About that time, some of Mr. Holden's sons, nearly grown to manhood's stature, joined their father, and no doubt helped both him and Mr. Moor in the work already successfully begun. The houses were in due time enclosed and covered, with boards probably from the Brattle sawmill; and being made comfortable, received the families of the builders and owners during the following autumn. Thus the two households were established in their respective habitations, facing the fortunes awaiting them in the years ahead. Mr. Moor had a wife and six sons, Mr. Holden a wife, three sons, and two daughters, a total of fifteen persons, the population of Narragansett No. 2 at the close of the year 1737.

It is well to take a hasty glance at these pioneer settlers as they were situated at the beginning of their new life in the town whose foundations they were permitted or commissioned to lay. It was no pleasing, easy task to which they had applied themselves, no holiday entertainment was theirs to enjoy, but a continuous round of struggle and self-sacrifice. Here they were in the wilderness; cut off from the happy companionship of relatives and friends, and from all the privileges and delights of civilized society; deprived of most of the comforts and of all the delicacies of domestic life; encountering difficulties and hardships unknown to old and well-established communities; surrounded by dangers of which they had little knowledge, their repose broken oftentimes by the discordant roar or cry of the untamed denizens of the forest; more or less apprehensive of attacks from wandering aborigines, the memory of whose cruel and bloody deeds in earlier days must have haunted both their sleeping and their waking hours. How little can people of the present day realize what these brave men and women passed through, and at what cost of toil, hardship, privation, and anxious solicitude was obtained the heritage now enjoyed within these borders! One of the early comers, Abner Holden, then a lad in the fifteenth year of his age, has left a memorial of those days worthy of a place in the annals of the time. In graphic language he describes the condition of the settlers thus: "A howling wilderness it was, where no man dwelt. The hideous yells of wolves, the shrieks of owls, the gobbling of turkeys, and the barking of foxes, was all the music we enjoyed; no friend to visit, no soul in the surrounding towns—all a dreary waste, exposed to a thousand difficulties."

All honor to the heroic and faithful men and women who so self-denyingly served not only their own time but the generations that were to come! "They labored and we have entered into their labors." May something of their royal temper and lofty purpose and sublime faith animate and glorify the hearts and lives of their descendants in this, our day, and forevermore.





## CHAPTER VI.

### NARRAGANSETT NO. 2—Continued.

#### PROGRESS OF SETTLEMENT—DIFFICULTIES—ATTAINMENTS— WESTMINSTER INCORPORATED.

A MOST important event in the history of this town had now transpired,—a signal achievement won. No longer was the territory a wild uninhabited waste, but the veritable abode of civilized man. A settlement had actually been made, opening the way to future development, to increase of numbers, to hoped-for prosperity, and ultimate success. And this necessitated concurrent action on the part of the proprietors at large, a more vigorous and progressive policy, practical measures for the supply of existing and prospective needs. Newly created demands must be met, or what had been gained would be put in peril, if not irretrievably lost.

The exigencies of the case seem to have been clearly recognized by those whose interests were involved, who, at an early day, caused a meeting to be called, as set forth in the following

#### “ADVERTISEMENT.

“Whereas a number of the proprietors of the Narraganset Township No. 2 by their Petition bearing Date September the 16<sup>th</sup> 1737 have petitioned the proprietors Commite for calling a proprietors meeting—These are therfor to notifie the proprietors of Said Township to Assemble att the House of Mr. Samuel Smith in the northwesterly precinct in Cambridge on Wensday the 23<sup>d</sup> Day of november next att nine of the Clock in the morning. To consider and act on the following articles, (viz.)

“1. To Consider what method the proprietors will Take for mending the Roads Leading to and in Said Township.

“2. To Know whether they will build a meeting House att present.

“3. To Know whether they will att presente proceed to the Division of the meadows in Said Township.

“4. To Know whether they will come into some measures To prevent Persons Taking Catle to Summer for the futor.

“5. To Know whether they will grant and Raise any money for the defreying the Charges that have or Shall arise in Said propriety.

“6. To Know what Incouragment they will give or what method they will Take for Erecting a grist mill in Said Town.

“7. To Conclud and agree who Shall be Setlers in Said Town.

“8. To Choose a clerk and Treasurer.

“Lastly To consider and conclud on any other affaires that may be thought proper att Said meeting.

“Medford Oct. 28 1737

By order of the proprietors Commite

“WILLIAM WILLIS proprietors Clark.”



For obvious reasons, only the more important of the items of business named in the above document, with the accompanying action of those concerned, is noticed in these pages, beginning with the first.

"The vote was put whether the Propriety would Choose a Commite of three persons To look out and mend the Road from Lancaster to the said Township and through the same to the meeting house Spot in said Town said Road to be layed and mended where it will best Accomodate the whole Town and it passed in the affermitive. Att Said meeting Mr. Benjamin Brown Mr Joseph Houlding and Mr Joseph Lynds wear choosen a Commite for said work.

"Att said meeting the vote was put whether the Propriety will proceed as soone as conveanantly they can to build a meeting House in said Town & it past in the affermitive.

"Att said meeting it was voted that the said meeting house Shall be Built forty-five foot long Thirty five foot wide and Twenty one foot Stud and also that said meeting house be raised the out Side Covered and the Roofe Shingled on or before the first Day of June in the year 1739.

"Att said meeting it was voted To Choose a Commite of Three persons to agree with workmen to build Said House in the best method and att the cheapest rate they can and to have the same finished so far as is befor voted.

"Att said meeting Capt Joseph Boman Mr. James Hays and Mr. Benjamin Brown wear Chosen a Commite to see the said work Effected according to the forgoing votes."

At the same meeting a tax of £3 10s. on each right was ordered to meet the expense involved in the preceding votes, and Capt. William Richardson, Mr. Benjamin Wellington, and Mr. John Cutting were chosen assessors to levy the said tax. Five persons were also appointed to collect the same and pay it over to the treasurer. The committee named to superintend the erection of the meetinghouse were voted "liberty To cutt Timber on any of the undevided Lands within Said Township for the building said House." In the discharge of the duty assigned them, this committee contracted with Mr. John Damon and Mr. Nathan Parker of Reading to put up this house of worship and finish it, so far as provided for, which contract was faithfully fulfilled, as will duly appear.

At an adjourned meeting held Jan. 4, 1737-8, it was voted "To make a Divition of all the medows in said Township" and "Joseph Holding Fairbanks Moor and Joseph Lynds were chosen a Commite for said work." They were instructed and empowered "To take a Survey of all the medows in said Township Excepting such as ly within any of the Lotts of the first Divition and when they have so Done they are to make a computation how much medow will come to Each Right. And to lay out to Each of those proprietors who hold any medow in their home Lotts so much more in Some of the other medows as will make their parts or shares Equell to the other parts or Shares which shall be laid out in order to a Draught of the other proprietors who hold no medow in their





first Division Lotts." An order for raising money to defray the expense of this work was passed.

To prevent any trouble that might arise from the refusal of certain proprietors to pay their assessed taxes, a committee, consisting of Joseph Bowman and Mr. Willis, clerk, was appointed to present a petition to the general court for all needful power to enforce the payment of all moneys legally levied upon the proprietors. The committee attended to the duty assigned them, and the power asked for was granted.

No action was taken, under the call for this meeting, upon the subject of a gristmill, or in respect to what manner of persons should be allowed to settle in the township. The former matter was attended to at a later date, the latter being left, apparently, to take care of itself in an informal, natural way, which proved satisfactory to all concerned.

During the year 1738, probably early in the spring, two families were added to the population of the township; that of Philip Bemis of Cambridge, consisting of himself, his wife, and six children, with an infant waif named Daniel Munjoy, whom he had received into his household; and of Thomas Bemis, brother of Philip, who had at the time only a wife. Philip Bemis settled on lot No. 66, long known as the Farnsworth place, the buildings of which have mostly disappeared, erecting his dwelling a few rods north of the present residence of George Harris. Thomas Bemis took up lot No. 104, more recently occupied by Mr. Timothy Brown, and at present by John Curry.

Sept. 8, 1738. A proprietors' meeting was held at the house of John Brown, in Watertown, at which Joseph Holden and James Hay were appointed a committee to see that each proprietor furnished a plan of his particular lot, according to instructions, to the clerk, that it might be copied into his book of records. A new standing committee was chosen, consisting of Joseph Bowman, Samuel Jackson, and Joseph Holden, and Benjamin Wellington was elected clerk and treasurer. These officers, for some years, seem to have been appointed for no fixed term of service, but discharged the duties delegated to them as long as their own convenience or pleasure permitted, or until a re-election was called for by the parties petitioning for a meeting of the propriety.

The standing committee was authorized to approve accounts against the propriety, and to give orders upon the treasury for the payment of the same. Thirty pounds (\$100) were appropriated "to hire some suitable person to preach the Gospel in said Township from this Time till the first of June next."

At a meeting of the proprietors held Dec. 17, 1738, Samuel Burr was chosen clerk and treasurer to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Benjamin Wellington, elected to those offices three months before. It was voted to encourage "the



building a Grist-mill in the Township," and William Richardson, Samuel Jackson, and James Hay were made a committee "to Treat with Maj. Brattle or any other Gentleman" upon the subject, and make return of their doings at an adjourned meeting. An additional sum of thirty pounds was voted "towards the support of Preaching the Gospel," and Joseph Holden and Fairbanks Moor were authorized to draw on the treasury for that amount. The proprietors adjourned to re-assemble on the 6th of June, 1739, "at the meetinghouse in the Narragansett Township, No. 2, at nine o'Clock in the forenoon," that being the date upon which the building was under contract to be finished suitable for occupancy.

The contract was so far fulfilled at the time stated as to allow not only the holding of the meeting of the proprietors, but also the dedication of the building to the worship and service of Almighty God. The proprietors voted that "what was Expended at Mr. Fairbanks Moor's and Mr. Joseph Holden's from sundown last to sundown next be paid by the whole Society." This vote, no doubt, had reference to the cost of entertaining those persons who had come from a distance, to attend the proprietors' meeting and the dedicatory services of the day.

This meeting of the proprietors was the first ever held in the township, and it was the last for many years. With the exception of the few who had made a settlement here, they were residents of the lower towns; and it was not to be expected that these would be willing to take a journey of forty or fifty miles into the wilderness, with poor roads and imperfect means of conveyance, when they might come together at some point near at hand and easily accessible, insuring the attendance of much larger numbers for the transaction of business, than could be convened on the territory. That they were not willing, and that they were greatly in the majority, put the resident proprietors at great disadvantage, and caused much trouble as time went on. The non-residents were not inclined to adopt measures which the residents thought to be needful to their comfort and prosperity, and this difference of feeling, intensified by a diversity or opposition of interest, grew ultimately into such pronounced antagonism or hostility as, in connection with other inauspicious circumstances, not only to seriously disturb the general peace and harmony of those concerned, but to hinder the healthful growth of the settlement, and even to jeopardize the entire undertaking. Nevertheless, certain things were so obviously demanded by the circumstances of the case, as well as by the residents of the township, that self-interest, if no other motive prevailed, would prompt to the granting of them. To take action upon some of the more important and imperative of these, a meeting of the proprietors was held at the house of Mr. Ebenezer Stedman, in Cambridge, on the 31st of October, the same year, 1739.



At an early stage of this meeting it was voted that "the Charge of this meeting viz:—the Dinners and Drink, be allowed out of the proprietors' Treasury." It was decided to do nothing more towards finishing the meetinghouse, which was then only an enclosed and covered frame, without pulpit, pews, or any inside conveniences and furnishings of any sort. Provision was made, however, for the continued preaching of the gospel, by an appropriation of sixty pounds (\$200).

The road that had been opened previous to this date from Lancaster to Narragansett No. 2 and beyond, ran through the farm of Mr. Thomas Plaisted, in Princeton, who offered to give the inhabitants the right of way and the privilege of making the same three rods wide. A vote of thanks to Mr. Plaisted was passed, and a committee was appointed to take an instrument from him, securing the right and privileges specified. It was also voted "to clear the Road from Crow Hill to the meetinghouse," which shows where the above named thoroughfare entered the township.

An attempt was made at this time, on the part of the settlers, to have all future meetings held in the township, but it failed, and a vote upon the question whether or not other proprietors should bear equal taxes with the settlers was decided in the negative, which seems to have been the first open indication of the rupture which was to seriously disturb the relations between resident and non-resident owners in after years.

At a proprietors' meeting, held Dec. 5, 1739, a new committee, consisting of Daniel Hoar, Samuel Jackson, and Thomas Livermore, was appointed "to see and get the work" of building a gristmill done, and a tax of three pounds upon each right was ordered, to meet the expense of the same, and other charges against the propriety. Three assessors and a collector were appointed to carry this order into effect, with instructions to proceed according to law with those who refused to pay the sums levied upon them.

It does not appear that a single family was added to the four previously located in township, during the year 1739. No doubt numerous persons were here looking the ground over, and making preparations for an early settlement, several of whom became permanent residents at a later day.

A meeting of the proprietors was held at Mrs. Mary Learned's, in Watertown, on Wednesday, Sept. 10, 1740. Messrs. Fairbanks Moor, Joseph Holden, Seth Walker, and perhaps others from the township, were in attendance, their lodging and breakfast being paid for, by vote, out of the common treasury, as were also the dinners for all those present, and "the Liquor brought into the Room where the Society met."

A committee was chosen at that date "to clear the road through the town." It consisted of Joseph Holden, Fairbanks Moor, and Joseph Miller, all resident proprietors. A vote was





passed providing for the assignment of the meadow lots which had already been laid out, and for making a second division of the unappropriated uplands of the township, as indicated thus:

*"Voted* that the Lotts be laid out in Sixty Acres Each, the Comtee to lay them out to proportion them as to quantity & quality, none to be less than Sixty acres."

The necessary provision for carrying this vote into effect was made, and some detailed instruction was given to those having charge of the work. A proposition respecting the building of a gristmill, of which there was very great need, received from Maj. William Brattle, who had erected the sawmill, was rejected, while one from Mr. Seth Walker, who had located on lot No. 22, at the outlet of the pond, was accepted. The offer of Mr. Walker was "to build said Grist-mill for one hundred pounds in bills of the Old Tenour [of uncertain value, probably not exceeding seventy-five or a hundred dollars at most] to have it fitt for Grinding Corn by the first of July next, and keep it in order for Building [grinding] Corn as afores<sup>d</sup> for the space of Twenty Years next ensuing from the s<sup>d</sup> first of July." The appropriation of money to meet the cost of the several enterprises ordered was voted.

At a proprietors' meeting "legally Assembled at the House of Mr. Ebenezer Stedmans inn-holder in Cambridge" June 2, 1741, after the choice of Samuel Jackson as moderator, it was

*"Voted*, that the Dinners &c. of this meeting be paid out of the Treasury and that Joseph Holden, Seth Walker Fairbanks Moor Thomas Stearnes Daniel Hoar Wm. Baldwin & Philip Bemis be allowed five shillings Each for their Expenses coming to this meeting besides the Expense of their Dinners."

At this time the propriety had no such permanent officers as assessors and collector, they being appointed, now and then, as their services were required. Suitable persons were therefore chosen to fill those positions, respectively, "for the Tax already Granted or shall be Granted at this Meeting."

A vote was passed, making provision for permanent preaching in the township during the six months following, and also for the payment of certain bills, previously incurred in furtherance of the same object. Similar votes were taken from time to time, as will be more fully specified in a future chapter.

The date had now arrived, at which, according to the conditions of the grant of the township, sixty families were to be settled within its boundaries, but scarcely one fourth of that number had yet located there. The general court, however, was disposed to be lenient with the proprietors, and not to hold them to the strict letter of the bond. Nevertheless, it was a matter of general importance and of self interest to all concerned, to have the residents multiply as rapidly as possible, and the



desirableness and wisdom of offering special inducements to new comers, commanded general approval. It was consequently, at the meeting under notice,

*"Voted that Twenty-nine pounds Ten shillings be paid out of the proprietors' Treasury to each of those who appear and do Settle in said Township within a Twelve Month from the Date hereof and Erect and Build a House of Eighteen foot long Sixteen foot wide & Seven foot Stud well finished to dwell in and also Clear and fence three Acres of land fit for Mowing and Tillage, according to the Judgment of the Committee hereafter Chosen to whom they are to give in their names."* *"The Comtee chosen are Mr. Joseph Lynde, Mr. Jos. Holden, Mr. John Cutting, Mr. Thomas Stearns and Mr. Seth Walker,"* *"any three of the five being authorized to see the work performed."*

According to the interpretation given to this vote, it had retroactive force, and so included not only persons complying with its conditions at a date subsequent to its passage, but to those who had previously settled, and conformed thereto. It continued in force only fifteen months, a proposition to extend the time beyond that period being negatived at a meeting held Sept. 1st, the following year. The number of persons who received the offered bounty was nineteen, their names, as found in the treasurer's books, being given below. Those having a star prefixed to them, eleven in all, were permanent residents, the other eight were in the place but a few years.

*Joseph Holden.	Seth Walker.	*John Hadley.
Joseph Lynde.	*Thomas Bemis.	Benjamin Garfield.
*Stephen Holden.	William Baldwin.	Capt. Joseph Bowman.
*Thomas Stearns	Samuel Smith.	*Samuel Whitney.
*Daniel Hoar.	*Joseph Miller.	Benjamin Bellows.
*David Dunster.	Joshua Child.	*Joseph Holden, Jr.
*Philip Bemis.		

Why the names of Isaac Stedman, John Stearns, Eleazar Bigelow, and some others, known to have been residents at the time when the offer of the bounty was in force, and to have remained in the place permanently, were not included in the above list, does not appear. Probably some technicality, or the failure to comply with the exact conditions required, caused the withholding from them the stipulated gratuity.

Before the close of the year 1741, at a meeting held Dec. 2d, action was taken looking to the settlement of a minister of the Gospel in the township. It was decided to effect this "as soon as may be with conveniency," and Joseph Holden, Fairbanks Moor, and Thomas Stearns were intrusted with the responsibility of bringing forward the settling said minister, and of treating with gentlemen to preach, as candidates for the office. (See Chap. VIII.)

The second division lots having been laid out, as previously ordered, and prepared for assignment to the individual proprie-





tors, were drawn at this meeting, as were also the meadow lots, in their proper order. The former of these had plans, nicely executed by the surveyor, Justinian Holden, and copied into the clerk's record book. They are also represented on the proprietors' plan of the township. The latter were planned by Benjamin Bellows, Jr., surveyor, and also transferred to the clerk's book. They do not, however, appear on the original plan of the town.

Another meeting of the proprietors was held at the same place Jan. 19, 1742-3, but little business of importance was transacted. Action upon the building of highways in the township, and the further finishing of the meetinghouse, was deferred till some coming time, and the proposition to hold future meetings in the township was voted down.

Sept. 14, 1743. A meeting of the proprietors was convened at the same place as before. A proposition to have a regular fixed date each year for the election of officers, the rendering of accounts, and the transaction of all important business, was at first adopted, but the vote was rescinded before the close of the session. A new standing committee, consisting of Dea. Benjamin Brown, Capt. Timothy Poole, and Mr. Jonathan Watson, not one of whom was a resident of the township, was elected. Other needful officers and important committees were chosen, among whom actual settlers were conspicuous by their absence.

Evidently the men who had contracted to build a sawmill and a gristmill, and keep them in good running order for twenty years, had become somewhat remiss in keeping their obligations, inasmuch as a committee was chosen to look into the matter, and commence suit against them, if necessary, the expenses to be borne by the propriety. The cause of dissatisfaction seems to have been removed without resort to legal measures, as no other complaint touching the matter was subsequently made.

At this meeting, as at previous ones, the resident proprietors, largely in the minority, were essentially ignored, and they returned to their homes not only dissatisfied, but deeply aggrieved. They saw that they were in the power and at the mercy of a strong opposition, apparently inclined and even determined, not to do what they themselves felt to be necessary, alike to their own comfort and to the growth and prosperity of the settlement. They saw no way out of their difficulties and troubles except through the interposition of the general court, whose aid they finally resolved to invoke. This they did by a petition, which they prepared and caused to be presented at the next February session of that body. The document states so fully the grievances endured, and the proposed remedy for them, that, with the exception of some unimportant details, or previously stated declarations, it is given entire:



"To His Excl<sup>y</sup>. Wm. Shirley and the Hon<sup>ble</sup> His Majesty's Council & House of Representatives in General Court assembled: The humble Petition of the inhabitants of Narraganset Township No. 2 Sheweth—That the Great and General Court or Assembly of this Province were pleased to grant to the Soldiers who served in the Narraganset War, etc. [The unimportant matter referred to is omitted.] and your Pet<sup>rs</sup> to the number of Twenty-one Familys have already settled upon and improved their Lotts in the said Tract of Land and have settled a Minister upon the said Land with the consent of the non-Resident proprietors who being a majority of the Grantees have chosen a Clerk and Treasurer who live about Fifty miles distant from the s<sup>d</sup> Settlement, and all their Proprietary meetings are held at Cambridge or Towns thereabouts whereby your pet<sup>rs</sup> are obliged to be at the expense and trouble of Fifty miles travel to attend those meetings and when they are there they are outvoted by a Majority of ye Proprietors present who living so far distant from the Spot cannot be Supposed to know so well as the Settlers what is necessary to be done for the speedy Settlement of the s<sup>d</sup> Tract of Land especially about laying out Highways for the accommodation of a Township. And if the nonresident Proprietors are at any time prevailed upon to vote for raising Money for Support of the Ministry or laying out highways there arises a very great Expense in sending their Com<sup>tees</sup> so many miles off to lay out their ways and the distant Proprietors are so free and generous when they Assemble together at their meetings that a very great part of what they vote to be raised for the Settlement is generally expended to defray Tavern expenses that there is very little left to be Laid out to forward the Settlement of Sixty Families as the General Court have ordered, and altho a good Minister has been Settled among your pet<sup>rs</sup> to preach the Gospel and has labored among them to good acceptance for about a Year past, yet after he has travelled Fifty Miles to the Treasurer in hopes of Receiving the money voted him for his Salary to his great expense & Disappointment he has received no money but been informed there is no money in the Treasury and so has been under an unhappy Necessity to return home without his Salary voted him to his great Discouragement. And as the Prop<sup>s</sup> deny your pet<sup>rs</sup> the privilege of the law Respecting our Annual Meeting to chuse Surveyors of highways and the pet<sup>rs</sup> are put to great charge in travelling so many miles to the Prop<sup>s</sup> meetings as often as they are called and the Settlers are retarded & Discouraged very much in their new Settlement;—

"Your Pet<sup>rs</sup> therefore pray your Exelency & Honors will be pleased to take the premises into your wise and Serious Consideration and in order to encourage the Speedy Settlement of the s<sup>d</sup> Tract of Land. That you will be pleased to Erect the s<sup>d</sup> six miles square into a Township and give the settlers or Inhabitants the Powers and Privileges of a Town by which means the Non-resident Proprietors will be unable to call their proprietary Meetings so far distant from the place of Settlement and the Settlement of the granted Land for a Township will be hastened—And that your pet<sup>rs</sup> may be enabled to defray the Charge of Supporting a Minister and School according to the order of the General Court. They humbly pray that the Non Resident Prop<sup>s</sup> may be obliged according to their Interest in the Lands to pay an equal Share with the Settlers till such Time as the number of Settlers shall be Completed according to the Conditions of the General Court's Grant of the s<sup>d</sup> Tract of Land the better to enable your pet<sup>rs</sup> to support the Charge of a Minister, laying out highways & other necessary Charges of a Town or otherwise as to your Excl<sup>y</sup> & Hon<sup>rs</sup> shall seem meet.

"(Signed by) JOSEPH HOLDEN and 23 others."

This petition was received in the general court Feb. 14, 1743-4, and a committee was chosen from the two branches "to take under consideration the subject matter" of it and "report as soon as may be what they judge proper for the



Court to do thereon." On the 25th of the same month they reported, advising "that a Committee be appointed and ordered to repair to the lands mentioned in <sup>sd</sup> Petition and view the same and How far the conditions of the Grant are Complied with as also to send for the Clerk of the Prop<sup>s</sup> to lay before them such Records Papers and accounts as they may judge necessary and report as soon as may be." The report was accepted and its recommendation adopted, a committee of three persons being named for the duty set forth. But neither the records of the court, nor other documents in the office of the secretary of the state, at Boston, contain any further information concerning this endeavor of the inhabitants of Narragansett No. 2 to obtain relief from their many troubles.

For several years subsequent to this date the infant settlement increased but slowly, if at all. Few new families came in, while several previously located here moved away. This state of things was produced, in part no doubt, by the existing inharmony between the resident and non-resident proprietors, just adverted to, and the attendant unwillingness of the latter to make needed improvements, and to offer inducements sufficient to attract new comers to the place; partly by reason of the breaking out of the war between England and France, known as King George's war, whereby the frontier plantations were put in fear and jeopardy, as will be more fully set forth in a forthcoming chapter; and partly from other causes, not needful to state in this connection.

Nevertheless, the forms of organic life were kept up by the propriety, and important items of business were transacted from time to time, though meetings were infrequent and little enterprise or persistency of effort seemed to characterize the prevailing policy.

Some doubt seems to have existed in regard to the strict legality of the manner in which the meetings of the proprietors had been usually called, and, in order to prevent any trouble on that score in the future, the notice for one to be held at Mr. Ebenezer Stedman's, in Cambridge, Sept. 19, 1744, was issued "in His Majesty's Name" under the authority of the "Province of the Massachusetts Bay" by "Samuel Danforth, Esq. Justice of Peace thro'out the Province Aforesaid." At this meeting, all the old officers were re-elected, and the standing committee was instructed "to Post those Lotts which are or shall be delinquent in Paying their Taxes and to Proceed with them as the Law Directs." Also "to inspect the Treasurer's accompts and to Lay them before the Proprietors once at Least in the year."

Previous to this time, a committee had been appointed to audit and settle the accounts of the proprietors of the township from the beginning, as they were represented in the books of the several successive treasurers. Having attended to the





duty assigned them, they made a detailed report at the meeting under notice. It comprised the financial transactions extending through a period of more than ten years, and included a similar report, submitted and approved Sept. 3, 1734. It was copied into the clerk's book of records, in full, but is presented here in a much condensed form, to wit:

Recd by Mr. Willis on Tax of July 9, 1734 . . . . .	£ 472. 12. 8.
Tax of £5 levied on each lot, Jan'y. 4, 1737 . . . . .	595.
" " £3 " " " " Mar 5, 1739 . . . . .	357.
" " £2. 5. 6. " " " " Sep. 10, 1740 . . . . .	270. 14. 6.
" " £1. 4. " " " " Dec 2, 1741 . . . . .	142. 16.
" " £10. 10. " " " " June 2, 1741 . . . . .	1249. 10.
" " £4 " " " " Sept 1, 1742 . . . . .	476.
Recd by sale of Lot No. 81 . . . . .	64. 15. 6.
" " " " " " 101 . . . . .	47. 15. 6.
Total Receipts . . . . .	<u>£3676. 4. 2.</u>
Paid out by Wm. Willis, Treasr . . . . .	£447. 3. 3.
" " " Saml Burr, " . . . . .	859. 1. 3.
" " " Saml Jackson, " . . . . .	813. 13.
" " " Daniel Cook, " . . . . .	949. 17. 4.
Due from estate of Wm. Willis . . . . .	£ 25. 9. 3.
" " " " Saml Burr . . . . .	173. 2. 3.
" " " " Saml Jackson . . . . .	48. 4.
Whole amount . . . . .	<u>246. 15. 6.</u>
Total Disbursements . . . . .	£3316. 10. 4.
Balance due on Taxes . . . . .	359. 13. 10.
Whole Amount . . . . .	<u>£3676. 4. 2.</u>
There was due Daniel Cook what he overpaid . . . . .	<u>£76. 15. 10.</u>
Making the actual assets of the Propriety. . . . .	<u>£282. 18</u>

The proprietors did not come together again till April 16, 1746, when they met at the house of John Bradshaw, innholder, Charlestown. Officers of the propriety were chosen, certain appropriations were made, and a vote was passed that plans of the second division and meadow lots be furnished by the respective surveyors to the clerk, to be copied by him into the record book. This was subsequently done and the plans may be found, finely executed and well preserved, in the proprietors' first book, pp. 136-215.

The next regular meeting was held June 22 1748, at the house of Mrs. Mary Learned, Watertown, when the form of re-electing the standing committee, clerk, and treasurer, was gone through with, and a new board of assessors chosen.

At a meeting held at Cambridge May 4, 1749, the number of the standing committee was increased from three to five persons, two new members being elected, in addition to the old



ones. The fact that this enlarged board did not have a single resident proprietor upon it, had no tendency to lessen the existing breach between the two parties already spoken of, and make the actual settlers contented with their lot, but rather the opposite. The dissatisfaction at the general management of affairs not only continued, but grew as the years went by, and at length ripened into a movement which was destined to secure the relief so long desired and sought, but thus far desired and sought in vain.

Meanwhile one consideration was shown the weaker, but the most deeply interested party, by the majority of the proprietors, which, whatever motive caused it, did not come soon enough to foreclose or prevent the redress-seeking action referred to. At a meeting, held Oct. 26, 1749, at John Bradshaw's, Charlestown, Joseph Miller, Daniel Cook, and Jonathan Watson were appointed a committee "to Lay out such highways in the propriety as they shall Judge necessary making report of their doings for acceptance." In discharge of the duty assigned them, this committee reported, the following year, certain roads, which were approved and constructed, as will appear hereafter. (See Chap. XII.)

A second appeal to the general court had been determined upon by the resident proprietors, and was made through a petition signed by Philip Bemis and others, presented at the session opening Jan. 5, 1749-50, the purport of which may be learned by the following extract from the court records, to wit:

"A Petition of the Inhabitants of the Township called Narraganset No. 2 complaining of the non-resident Proprietors for their not settling upon their lots nor sending others to settle them, nor paying their part of the charge of the support of the Ministry and the necessary expenses of the town; complaining also of the Committee of said Township for not levying their charges on the Delinquents lots of land and Praying that the Court would order that their Proprietors meetings may be held within the Town and that the delinquent Proprietors may be obliged forthwith to settle their lots and pay their dues or that the Petitioners may be otherwise relieved as this Court shall order."

Taking the usual course of proceeding in such cases, the petitioners were required to notify the non-resident proprietors, through the columns of "the Post Boy," to appear at a given date and show cause, if they have any, why the prayer of the petition should not be granted.

As the non-resident proprietors did not appear at the time designated, it was ordered, when the matter came up again, on the 15th of April, that a committee be chosen "to consider of this Petition and report what they judge proper for this Court to do thereon." The committee was accordingly named, attended to the duty assigned it, and reported the following day

"That a Committee be chosen by this Court in their present Session and that said Committee on the first Wednesday in January next or as soon after





as may be repair to Narraganset No. 2, and view the settlement there made and the said Committee are fully authorized and are required to commence and prosecute to effect a Suit or Suits in behalf of the Province against any and every Person or Persons whom it concerns for recovering the Possession of all such Lots or Shares as shall not be settled agreeable to the terms or Conditions of the Grant of said Township. And the said Committee are empowered to agree with such Person or Persons as shall appear to purchase the same and will engage in a reasonable time to bring forward a Settlement thereof for all such Lots or Shares possession of which shall be recovered as aforesaid. And as soon as such Person or Persons shall have complied with the terms of their agreement respectively the said Committee are hereby authorized and required to give a good and sufficient Deed or Deeds of conveyance of all or any such Lots or Shares and the Produce thereof they are required to pay into the Province Treasury. The Committee are also of the opinion That the Proprietors of Narraganset No. 2, be obliged to hold all their future meetings within the bounds of said Township. The Committee are further of the opinion that it is necessary an Act should pass this Court enabling Courts of the General Sessions of the Peace to give Relief to ministers in new Townships where the Inhabitants fail of their contracts in such manner as may be directed or prescribed in such Act. All which is humbly submitted."

This report was accepted and its recommendations adopted. A committee for visiting the township, etc., was appointed, with John Chandler, Esq., chairman, also one "to prepare and draft a Bill agreeably to the last Paragraph in the Report."

From what can be learned, it seems that the non-resident proprietors did not get the notice "to appear and show cause why the Petition of Philip Bemis and others should not be granted" until after the action of the court just named. When they found out what had been done, they immediately went to work to obtain a stay of proceedings and a reversal of judgment in the case. They held a meeting and chose a committee, with John Hunt chairman, to draw up a protest and present it to the legislature. This was done in a most vigorous and persuasive way, as is shown by the still preserved document itself, which is omitted here for want of space.

But the court had no idea of going back on its record and the protest of the non-residents was "ordered to be dismissed." The residents must have rejoiced exceedingly at the summary action of the court in this particular, and awaited the visit of the committee to the township and its subsequent report, with fond anticipation. One important point had been gained beyond all peradventure. The meetings of the proprietors were henceforth to be held in the township to the obvious advantage of the residents here. This is clearly indicated in the results of the very first one after the decree of the legislative authority upon that point. It was held in the meetinghouse of Narragansett No. 2, Sept. 12, 1750, when new officers of the township were chosen, every one of whom was an actual member of the settlement, as follows: *Standing Committee*, Joseph Holden, Daniel Hoar, Jonathan White, Richard Graves, and Thomas Stearns; *Clerk*, Andrew Darby; *Treasurer*, Joseph Holden;



*Assessors*, Joseph Miller, Daniel Hoar, Andrew Darby; *Collectors*, Daniel Walker, Isaac Jackson. Philip Bemis, Daniel Hoar, and Joseph Miller were made a committee to lay out roads in the township.

A vote was passed offering five pounds bounty to each of those persons who should first settle, until the originally required sixty families should be made up, not including the nineteen to whom a much larger gratuity had already been paid under a previous vote.

Oct. 24, 1750. At a proprietors' meeting held at this date, upon taking up for consideration the article of the call relating to the further finishing of the meetinghouse, it was

"*Voted* that they will proceed in finishing so far of the meeting-house as to build the canope over the pulpit and the Communion table and to build Stayers and the Galleries."

Other items of business having been transacted, without completing all that were to receive attention, it was voted to "Journ the meeting till to morrow sun half an hour high."

At the re-assembling in the morning, the standing committee was instructed "to provide for the Court's Committee when they shall come to view the Settlers who have Complied with the Court's Act at the proprietors' Charge."

Up to this date, all the taxes had been levied upon the first division or "Home" lots. This was equitable and just, so long as the proprietors of these lots were owners of rights in the other lands of the township growing out of their original proprietorship. But when the subsequently divided lots passed by sale to other hands, it became necessary to establish a rule whereby they should be made to contribute their share to the revenues of the propriety. Hence it was voted that "one third part of the taxes that shall be hereafter raised should be laid on the First Division lots, one third on the Second Division lots and the remaining one third on the after drafts and meadow lots of the town."

During the spring of the following year, 1751, the committee of the general court chosen the previous April "to visit and examine into the condition and prospects of Narraganset No. 2," attended to the duty for which they were appointed, and on the 13th of June made their report to the council. On account of its general importance and of the detailed information it gives of the state of affairs in the township at that period, it is presented entire, as preserved in the original in the Massachusetts Archives, vol. cxvi, p. 113.

"The Committee Appointed by ye Great and General Court in April 1750 to view the Settlement at the new Township called Narraganset No. 2, having repaired to sd place and carefully attended that service, beg leave to report that the following persons have fulfilled the Conditions of the Grant, Viz:—



"Names of Persons Settled there and for What Lots Duty is done.

Names.		No.	Origl Prop <sup>r</sup> .
1.	Daniel Hoar,	10.	Robert Fosket.
	and for	11.	Saml Chandler.
2.	John Hoar,	13.	Thos Nichols.
	and for	17.	Ebenezer Breed.
3.	Richd Graves,	58.	Wm. Willis.
4.	Dea. Jos. Holden,	1.	John Smith.
	and for	18.	Zechh Davis.
5.	Joseph Miller,	32.	James Clarke.
	and for	61.	George Grinds.
6.	Joseph Hosley,	37.	Nathl Norcross.
	and for	38.	John Hall.
7.	Samuel Whitney,	51.	Ebenr Boynton.
	and for	52.	Jona Remington Esqr.
8.	David Dunster,	76.	John Whittemore.
	and for	117.	Thomas Jeners.
9.	Jos. Holden, Jr.,	19.	John Sherman.
	and for	26.	Samuel Fosket.
10.	Reuben Miles,	14.	Downing Champncy.
11.	Thos Stearns,	42.	Edd Jackson.
12.	John Stearns,	41.	Ebenr Graves.
13.	Stephn Holden	40.	Joseph Rutter.
	and for	72.	Joseph GROUT.
14.	Philip Bemis,	66.	John Griffin.
	and for	116.	Joseph Ball.
15.	Wm. Bemis,	65.	Abram Skinner.
16.	Danl Walker,	82.	Benjn Wellington.
	and for	88.	Isaac Williams.
17.	Saml Gibbs,	20.	John Mosley.
18.	Thos Bemis,	104.	Joseph Bemis.
19.	Eleazer Bigelow,	12.	Joshua Bigelow.
	and for	6.	Saml Kneeland.
20.	Seth Harrington,	23.	Geo. Herrington.
	and for	110.	Samuel Cook.
21.	Jacob Warren,	59.	Matthew Gibbs.
	and for	97.	George Parmeter.
22.	John Rand,	50.	Nathl Holsey.
	and for	94.	Nathl Parker.
23.	James Taylor,	98.	John More.
24.	Andw Darby,	22.	Zechh Smith.
25.	Noah Miles,	36.	Peter Hay.
26.	John Miles,	57.	William Willis.
	and for	105.	Joseph Lynde.
27.	Obadh Kendall,	39.	Joseph Center.
	and for	77.	Gershom Cutter.
28.	Henry Stevens,	112.	Wm. Brattle.
	By building a mill and 12		
	acres for mowing.		
29.	Tim <sup>o</sup> Mosman,	16.	Capt. Jos. Bowman.
	and for	55.	Capt. Jos. Bowman.
30.	Abner Holden,	53.	Wm. Shattuck.
31.	Rev. Mr. Marsh,	54.	John Winslow.
32.	John Brooks,	43.	Nathl Smith.

"The following persons are new Settlers mostly since ye 1<sup>st</sup> of last January.

Names.	No.	Origl Prop <sup>r</sup> .	Condition of Lot, etc.
1. David Bemis,	21.	Samuel Smith,	has raised a house & is there.
2. Elijah Gibbs,	2.	Samuel Damon,	has fenced & cleared some land.





Names.	No.	Origl Prop <sup>r</sup> .	Condition of Lot, etc.
3. Benjn Gould,	106.	Humphry Miller,	for James Hay, built a good house—cleared & fenced 3 acres. B. G. lives there.
4. Ebenezer Taylor,	89. 49.	John Hawkins, Joseph Smith,	is there by his Son, has built a house, cleared and fenced four acres.
5. Joseph Lynd,	119. 9.	John Sprague, Alexander Phillips,	has Built a good house, fenced 20 acres. Ruff cleared 3 acres of it. Robt Scaver lives in ye house, but has a place of his own.
6. Thomas Conant,	79. 4.	Jacob Call, Eleazer Johnson,	has a good house upland cleared & in a good way.
7. Ebenezer Conant,	113.	John Trumble,	Cleared, broke up and Sewed 4 acres with Rye. Raised house & has family there.
and for 8. Ephraim Dutton,	114. 3.	Thomas Taylor, Stephen Cook,	Several acres cleared, cellar dug, house framed, boards & Shingles ready & is in a good way.
9. Elisha Biglo,	18.	Richard Beers,	Several acres well cleared & fenced in parcells & broke up, a house & in a good way.
10. James Walker,	24.	Thomas Hodgman,	a house almost done, a good field broke up & fenced—his family is there.
11. Nathan Merriam,	81.	Onesiphorus Pike,	has well cleared & fenced a sufficient Quantity of Land & has a small house or shed.
12. Jona Lawrence,	27.	Major Swain,	a house, land cleared & fenced, in a good way.
and for 13. Nathl Sever,	60. 30.	Nathl Goodwin, Timothy Cutler,	a frame of a house, 3 acres cleared & fenced, is there with his family.
and for 14. Ephm Stevens, 15. Nathan Whitney, 16. Thos Merriam, and for 17. James Cohee,	115. 101. 90. 83. 84. 96.	John Barnard, Ephm Cutler, James Kettle, George Mudge, John Adams, Daniel Cheever,	A frame & Land Cleared. is at work on ye Spott, a good man. is at work on ye Spott, a good man. A good Cellar House, land cleared & orchard, & in a good way.
18. John Sangar, 19. Josiah Cutting, 20. John Woodard, and for	48. 45. 7. 29.	John Herrington, John Cuting, John Mudge, John Marston,	is building & has Cleared 4 acres. is building & has Cleared 4 acres. 3 acres cleared on one Lott, 2 acres & a frame on ye other Lott—both belong to Nathan Parks [Parker].
21. Robert Sever,	70.	Dennis Headley,	a frame of a house 2 acres cleared one Broke & 3 fenced—He lives in Joseph Lynds House & says he has a Son coming.
22. Wm. Edgehill, and for	28. 67.	Thos Herrington, Richd Taylor,	Cleared & fenced 4 acres & has got Timber for a house.

"The above Twenty two Settlements are mostly brot forward since the order of Court appointing this Comittee.



Names.	No.	Origl Prop <sup>r</sup> .	Condition of Lot, etc.
1. John Gill,	87.	Thomas Brown,	a little land cleared, a small frame of a house.
2. Samuel Hager,	25.	Samuel Hager,	a little house.
3. Micall Brigden,	70.	James Smith,	a good house, very good Improvements.
and for	71.	Samuel Thompson,	
4. Isaac Jackson,	92.	Samuel Lamon,	a frame of a little house no cellar nor chimney a little land Cleared had two men at work.
and for	93.	Isaac Beach,	
5. Samuel Read,	62.	Mamwell Long,	Is giting Timber for a house, has cleared Several acres & Some abt two To grass.
and for	107.	William Russell,	
6. Israel Beal,	91.	Joseph Priest,	Cleared a little.
7. Samuel Damon,	31.	Benj <sup>n</sup> Pameter	
and for	15.	(Davis), Benj <sup>n</sup> Priest	
		(Pameter),	A little house, Some land cleared.

"It is said the above seven persons are coming speedily or some others in their room.

"The following have done work on their lots, but are not here.

1. Josiah Heywood,	5.	Thomas Welch.
and for	44.	Thomas Corey.
2. Joseph Gibbs,	102.	Micall Flagg.
3. Joshua Church,	74.	Jonas Cutting.
4. Benj <sup>n</sup> Bellows,	78.	Jona Willard.

"We beg leave to inform the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Court that we are Really apprehensive that the Twenty two persons following those who have done their duty are in earnest and will fully comply with y<sup>e</sup> conditions of Settlement as soon as tis possible, they appearing to be Industrious men and but new purchasers. [and] are therefore of opinion that further time be allowed them for performing the conditions of their Grants and that they dont obtain a Confirmation of their lands till it is made to Appear they have So done.

"The following Grantees have not done any labor on their lotts, Vizt:—

"Jonathan Butterick,	56.	Zech <sup>h</sup> Cutting,	86.
William Gleason,	63.	Henry Sumers,	99.
James Lowden,	64.	Thomas Wellington,	100.
John Sawin,	68.	Joseph Smith,	103.
William Burt,	69.	Joseph Pratts heirs,	111.
Dr. Wellington,	73.	Capt. Prentice's heirs,	108.
John Parkhurst,	75.	John Knight,	109.
Thomas Skinner,	80.	John Gates,	120.
Margery Dowse,	85.		

"We humbly submitt it to the Wisdom of the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Court to give further directions concerning the above Seventeen lots whether they shall be declared forfeit, or the owners Mulcted in proper sums towards the support of the Ministry and finishing the Meetinghouse there and for payment of this view &c.

Per order of the Com<sup>tee</sup> J. CHANDLER."

This report was received and read in the council on the date named, when the further consideration of it was deferred to the next session of the court. What was finally done with its suggestions does not appear from the records.





At a meeting of the proprietors, on the 19th of July, 1751, it was voted "to proceed to lay out the undivided lands of sd Township in Two Equal Divisions to each Right and the two Divisions to be Cuppled together and have but one Draught." Measures were adopted for the purpose of having this vote properly executed.

It was decided to let the meetinghouse lot lie common for the present, also the lot in front of Joseph Holden's, bordering on the pond at its northeastern extremity, which was not included in either division of the lands. The lot adjoining the last and similarly conditioned (the one now lying between Hobart Raymond's and the pond) was voted to Joseph Holden, Jr., "in consideration of his giving a deed of the burying ground to the Proprietors and the right to lay a road across his land to lot No. 22,"—essentially where it now runs.

At a meeting held Dec. 11th the same year, it was ordered that all bills, accounts, and charges against the propriety, which had hitherto been submitted to the whole body for approval, should be left to the discretion of the standing committee. That committee was also instructed "to post all lots whose owners were delinquent in the payment of taxes and to prosecute them with effect in the law."

From this time forward for several years, considerable attention was paid by the growing population to public improvements of various kinds and to the maintenance of the established institutions of the settlement, the important particulars of which will be noticed under appropriate heads hereafter, and so need not be mentioned in this connection. Only a few occasional items of interest will therefore receive attention in the present hasty sketch of what transpired.

The meetings of the propriety had always been called by notices, posted for an indefinite length of time in each and every one of the nine towns where there were proprietors residing. But at the last date given, it was voted "to Notifie the proprietors of the narraganset No. 2 for the meetings for the future by Written Advertisements in Narraganset No. 2, Lunenburg, Watertown, Cambridge, and Charlestown, fourteen Days Before the time for the meeting." The custom of holding regular annual meetings for the choice of officers and the transaction of important public business was inaugurated March 28, 1753, and has continued to this day.

On the 25th of July of that year, the vote in reference to the division of the remaining lands of the township, passed June 19, 1751, which had not been executed, was rescinded, and one substituted for it providing for the laying out of "one series of lots—the size of the lots being Sixty acres with an allowance of two acres for highways in each lot." Mr. Benjamin Houghton of Lancaster was appointed "for to quallifie the lots to be laid out," while Capt. Daniel Hoar and Dea. Joseph Mil-



ler were "added to Mr. Houghton to agree with a Surveyor" to do the work. They employed Mr. Hezekiah Gates of Lancaster and Mr. John Miles of the township, who were assisted in their labors by John Gates and Ezra Houghton of Lancaster, and Nathan Heywood of Lunenburg.

On the 17th of April, 1754, after the choice of a new list of officers, a condensed statement of the transactions of the treasurer, Dea. Joseph Holden, was made by a committee previously appointed to examine and report upon them, and a salary of £1 6s. 8d. (\$4.44) was voted that public servant for the year to come, and £5 6s. 8d. (about \$18.00) for past services. Up to this date no settlement of the accounts of the preceding treasurer, Mr. Daniel Cook, deceased, from September, 1744 to September, 1750, had been made, but at a meeting held July 31, 1754, a committee chosen June 19, 1751, presented a report relating thereto. According to the statements it contained, Mr. Cook had received during his six years of service succeeding the settlement heretofore noted, the sum of £4,153 3s. 9d., and had paid out £3,927 11d., leaving a balance due the propriety from his estate of £226 2s. 10d., and a committee was chosen to settle with the heirs of the estate on that basis.

All was not peace and harmony among the early settlers and fathers of the town. They were human like other people, and had their alienations and embitterments. Troubles with Rev. Mr. Marsh, resulting in several suits at law, will be spoken of in their proper connection. Both Dea. Thomas Stearns and Andrew Darby had grievances with the proprietors, for the redress of which they appealed to the courts. That of Mr. Stearns, however, was settled in his favor by a board of arbitration mutually chosen. The nature of the difficulty is not known. Mr. Darby's case grew out of the laying of a piece of road across his land. It continued for several years. How it was finally adjusted has not been ascertained.

On the 23d of April, 1755, the treasurer made his first annual statement, which is of interest inasmuch as it shows the extent of the financial transactions of the township at that period. There had been received by him during the year previous £134 16s. 1d. (about \$450), and he had paid out £133 1s. 5d. 3f., leaving a balance to begin a new year with of £1 14s. 7d. 1f. (a little less than \$2.50).

For several years things went on prosperously in the new settlement. After the meetings of the propriety were held in the township, the resident owners had everything their own way. Improvements were made and advantages secured at considerable expense, which was a cause of dissatisfaction among the non-resident proprietors. Taxes being levied, as previously stated, upon both residents and non-residents alike, the latter came to feel after a time that this was unjust — that as the former enjoyed most of the benefits accruing from the



enlarged expenditures, they should be required to pay proportionally for them. But they were powerless to obtain redress of themselves, being now in a minority. It was now, therefore, their turn to appeal to the general court, which they did in a petition setting forth that the new plantation called Narragansett No. 2, "is completely filled with Inhabitants and in a flourishing condition"; that as the taxes there are laid on all the lands, "those who have got good Improvements pay nothing for them as such"; that they think it "hard for those who do not live in the place and have made no improvements on their lots to pay as much as others whose lots have greatly increased in value"; and praying that the "said Plantation may be incorporated into a town and that for the future the Charges arising in said place may be paid as in other Towns or Districts &c." This petition, signed by Joseph Lynde and ten others, though designed for the May session of the court in 1755, did not obtain recognition and action till Feb. 12, 1756, when the petitioners were ordered to notify the inhabitants of Narragansett No. 2 of the existence of such a petition, and require them to appear before the court on the first Friday of its next sitting, "to show cause, if any they have, why it should not be granted."

In response to this order, the resident proprietors sent in a remonstrance declaring that the inhabitants of Narragansett No. 2 were in no such flourishing condition as was represented by the petitioners, that the non-residents had not borne equal taxes with the residents, and claiming that the former should not be relieved of the obligation to pay their full share of the expenses of the plantation, inasmuch as two new county roads had recently been laid across the territory, and because of the poverty of the inhabitants and of the still existing liability to incursions from the Indians, which would cause many families to leave the place and so render it more difficult for those that remained to carry on the undertaking. They begged the court to take these things into consideration and refuse to incorporate the plantation at present into a town. This remonstrance was signed by Joseph Holden and thirty-nine others.

On the 2d of April the whole subject came before the legislature for further action, when Benjamin Lincoln and two others were made a committee "to take the Petition and Answer under consideration, hear the parties, and Report what they judge proper for this Court to do thereon." On the 20th of the same month this committee reported in favor of incorporating the town under certain specified conditions relating to "the support of the Gospel for ten years." The council adopted the recommendation of the committee, but the house referred the whole subject to the next session of the court. The resident proprietors, however, not satisfied with the outlook in the case, immediately prepared and forwarded to the legislature a second remonstrance, re-affirming what they





had said before and praying that if the court see fit to incorporate them notwithstanding their reasons against it, "we may not be sett off as a District annex to any other town but that we may be sett off as a Town according to the oregonall Grant of said township and that ye non-resident proprietors may be obliged to bear equall Taxes with us for the space of ten years to the Support of ye Gospel and Likewise obliged to pay [their full share] for mending the Highways for the Space of three years, and Likewise praying that Mr. Benjamin Houghton's farm [formerly the governor's] of five hundred acres which has Never as yet paid any taxes may be taxed a peny an acer for the Space of ten years, &c." This was signed by Joseph Holden and thirty-four others.

When the petition was again before the legislature, accompanied by their second protest, it was voted "to refer the matter to the next General Court." It did not come up again, however, till Aug. 19, 1757, at which time a bill of incorporation was introduced. It passed in the house, but the council refused to concur. A year and a half later, April 17, 1759, a similar bill went through both branches of the general court but failed to receive the signature of the executive. The action at these several dates was *presumably* upon the petition of Joseph Lynde and others, first presented in February, 1756.

While matters were going on at Boston, as detailed above, the usual routine of business affairs was kept up in the new settlement. A meeting of the proprietors was held Oct. 29, 1755, mainly for the purpose of drawing the third division lots. Before proceeding with that duty, however, it was agreed that "any of the Proprietors who shall not be satisfied with their drawing may have the privilege of giving up said lots in exchange for others of the standard size selected where they may choose from the undivided lands, to be surveyed and laid out at their own cost." The result of this drawing was given in full in the clerk's books, to which plans of the lots were partially transferred, though they do not appear on the original plan of the township. They were very much scattered, but lay mostly in the westerly part of the territory within the limits of the town of Gardner. Attempts have been made in recent years to locate them, but only in a few instances with success.

At a proprietors' meeting on the 29th of September, 1756, it was voted that the meadow lots, which had hitherto been exempt from taxation, should thereafter be subject thereto according to the number of acres in the same, respectively.

At the time of the final action of the general court upon the question of the incorporation of Narragansett No. 2, in response to the petition of Joseph Lynde and others, which took place in April, 1759, the inhabitants of the township had become well convinced of the importance of the step to themselves, and soon after sought for the accomplishment of that



result in their own behalf. During the following summer or early autumn they prepared a petition to the general court, and as it is the one upon which the final act of incorporation, as it passed both houses of the legislature, was based, a copy of it in full is herewith presented :

"To His Excellency Thos Pownall Esqr. Capt. General and Governor in Chief in and over His Majesty's province of the Massachusetts Bay in New-england and Vice admiral of the same, and To the Honble His Majesty's Councile & the Honble House of Representatives in General Court assembled att Boston August The fiftenth 1759:— The Humble Petition of the Inhabittance of a New Plantation Called and Known by The Name of Narraganset Township Number Two :

"Humbly Sheweth:—

"That Whereas The Greate and General Court was pleased to Grant This Township in the year of our Lord 1732, To Number of Soldiers and their Legall Descendants as a Reward for Their Public Service in the Narraganset War under these Considerations Viz. That the Grantees Settle Sixty families with a Learned Orthodox Minister in Said plantation within Seven years from the Grant of said Township; in Compliance with the Conditions Enjoyed on the Grantees your Exelency's and Honours' petitioners (Together with other inhabittance) have appeared and Settled said plantation Near to the Number Required and have also Had a minister Settled in said plantation (Tho now Destatute of one) your petitioners Show that we Labour under many Difficulties and Disadvantages by reason of our Lying under a propriety without Haveing the power and privileges of a Town (Tho the occupants are many of them unable to bare the Charge of a Town) Therefore your Exy and Honours' petitioners Humbly pray That Said Township may be Incorporated into a Town with all the privileges and power of the Same; but if anything Lyes as an irremovable Bar in the way whereby we can by no means be a Town att present, Then we pray that we may be a Separate District annex to no town till a Dore may be opened for our being a Town—your Exys & Honrs petrs Likewise Show That we are now Destatute of a Gosspell minester and Have one to Settle Directly and many of the Inhabittance but new Settlers and very unable to bare the charges arising in said plantation without a tax on the non-residents, therefore your petits Humbally pray that the non-residents' Lands may be obliged to pay Equal Taxes with us for Seven years to the Support of the Gosspell and that the non-resident proprietors may be obliged to bare Equal Taxes with the inhabitants in Laying out and Clearing any New Roads that they shall Require to their Lands, and as The Charges arising this year on the Inhabitants will be Greate if Incorporated therefore your petits Humbally pray That the plantation may be freed from the province Tax for this year.

"And your petitioners (as in duty bound) shall ever pray.

"JOSEPH HOLDEN.

RICHARD GRAVES.

JOHN WOODWARD.

EBENEZER TAYLOR.

JAMES COHEE.

NATHAN WHITNEY.

WILLIAM EDGELL.

ELIJAH GIBBS.

RICHARD BAKER.

NATHANIEL WHEELER.

JONAS WHITNEY.

THOMAS STEARNS.

JOHN WHEELER.

JOHN RAND.

ABNER HOLDEN.

ANDREW DARBY.

JOSEPH HOLDEN, JR.

JOHN STEARNS.

NATHAN WOOD.

NATHAN PIERCE.

JOSHUA BIGELOW.

JAMES TAYLOR.

JOSEPH MILLER.

JOHN BROOKS.

JOSIAH CUTTING.

JOSIAH JACKSON.

DANIEL WALKER.

SAMUEL WHITNEY

DAVID BEMIS.

BENJN HORSLEY.

SETH HERRINGTON.

JONAS WINSHIP."

It seems that this petition came before the house of representatives on the 19th of August, receiving favorable consideration. A bill for the incorporation asked for was at once





submitted and went through the several stages of enactment on that and immediately subsequent days. It was also read in the council but did not reach the chair of the governor.

On the 5th of October following, the subject again came before the court, when the petitioners were ordered to notify the non-resident proprietors of what was going on, that they might show cause, if they had any, why the prayer of the petition should not be granted. It is evident that this order had reference to that part of the petition which related to the taxing of the lands of the non-residents, inasmuch as a final bill of incorporation went through its several stages in the lower branch of the legislature on the same day, and in the upper branch on that and the following days, though it did not receive the signature of the governor until the 20th of the month, when the desired consummation took place. The exact form which the matter assumed is shown in the appended copy of the

### "ACT OF INCORPORATION.

#### "AN ACT

"For erecting the New Plantation called Narraganset No. 2 in the County of Worcester into a District by the name of

#### "WESTMINSTER.

"WHEREAS, the inhabitants of a township formerly granted by the great and general Court commonly called Narraganset No. 2, have addressed this Court setting forth the many difficulties they now labor under which would be effectually remedied if they were constituted a District:— Be it therefore enacted by the Governor, Council, and House of Representatives

"That the lands formerly granted by the great and general court of this Province to the descendants of those who were in the Narraganset fight with the Indians of that country now called the proprietors of Narraganset township No. 2, lying in the County of Worcester, be and hereby are erected into a distinct and separate District by the name of Westminster, the bounds of Said District to be according to their original grant and as the said lands were laid out and the plan thereof accepted by the great and general court in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and twenty eight, and that the inhabitants of said District be and hereby are invested with all the powers, privileges, and immunities, which the inhabitants of towns within this province do or by law ought to enjoy, that of sending a representative to the general assembly only excepted.

"*And be it further enacted* That William Richardson Esq., be and hereby is empowered to issue his warrant directed to some principal inhabitant of said District, requiring him to notify and warn the inhabitants thereof qualified by law to vote in town affairs, to meet at such time and place as shall be therein set forth, to choose all such officers as shall be necessary to manage the affairs of said District.

"AND WHEREAS, the great and general court of this Province at their session in May, 1757, laid a tax of fifty pounds on the inhabitants of said Narraganset No. 2, and at their session in May, 1758, one other tax of fifty pounds, and at their session in May last, one other tax of fifty-eight pounds, ten shillings and two pence, towards defraying the public charges of this Province, which sums have not yet been assessed or paid into the province treasury—

"*Be it further enacted* That the Assessors that may be chosen at the meeting of said inhabitants to be called as aforesaid be, and they hereby are impowered and directed to assess the aforesaid sums upon the inhabitants of



said District according to the rules of assessment in the respective tax acts mentioned, and commit said assessment to the collector or collectors that may then also be chosen, and return a certificate of the name or names of such collector or collectors with the sum total to each of them committed, to the Treasurer of this Province on or before the first day of December next, and the treasurer for the time being upon receipt of such certificate is hereby impowered and ordered to issue his warrants to such collector or collectors requiring them respectively to collect the whole of the respective sum assessed on each particular person, and to pay in their collection and issue their accounts of the whole at or before the thirty-first day of March one thousand seven hundred and Sixty.

"Oct. 10, 1759. This Bill having been read three several times in the House of Representatives—passed to be enacted.

S. WHITE, Speaker.

"Oct. 10, 1759. This Bill having been read three several times in Council—passed to be enacted.

A. OLIVER, Secretary.

"Oct. 20, 1759. By the Governor. I consent to the enacting of this Bill.

T. POWNALL."

It will be seen by the provisions of the above instrument, that Westminster, having been erected into a district only, had at the outset no right of representation in the government of the growing province. For ten years subsequent to the date of incorporation its inhabitants were without a voice in public legislation. At the expiration of that period, however, they were clothed with all the powers and privileges of the people of other towns, as will be noted in due time and place.

**Fathers and Founders.** In closing what may be termed the first or rudimentary period of the history of Westminster, it is deemed advisable to present a complete list of the early settlers,—of those who located here previous to the date of incorporation, and contributed, by their presence and labors, to that consummation and to whatever of prosperity and success resulted therefrom. In that list, found below, the names are given in chronological order, each one accompanied by the name of the town whence the person represented came, the date of his coming, the number of the lot where he located, and its present occupant. When the lot has been given up as a place of residence, the fact is indicated in this form (A. H. No. —), whereby the reader is referred to the chapter of this work entitled "Abandoned Homesteads," in which he will find under a corresponding number the exact site described, with collateral information. The dates are, for the most part, correct, though in a few instances there may be an error of a year or two. Very doubtful ones are marked thus (?). A star (\*) before a name shows that it appeared on the first tax list of the incorporated district, bearing date Dec. 17, 1759. A dagger (†) following a name implies that the person referred to was a transient resident. Children of early settlers coming to the township with their parents during their minority and locating here in mature life, have the year when they became "of age" noted in



the column of dates. Generally speaking, each person mentioned had a family, at least a wife, who joined him at an early day after his settlement. Biographical notices, personal incidents, family antecedents, pedigrees, etc., will appear in due place in Part II of this work.

## EARLY SETTLERS.

1. Fairbanks Moor (†),	Lancaster,	1737	19	Hobart Raymond.
2. *Joseph Holden,	Watertown,	1737	1	F. E. Green.
3. *Joseph Holden, Jr.,	Watertown,	1737	19	Hobart Raymond.
4. *Philip Bemis,	Cambridge,	1738	66	(A. H. No. 60.)
5. *Thomas Bemis,	Cambridge,	1738	104	John Curry.
6. *Stephen Holden,	Watertown,	1738	40	Wid. Jonas Cutler.
7. *Thomas Stearns,	Watertown,	1740	42	Warren La Geyet.
8. Seth Walker (†),	Groton,	1740	22	(A. H. No. 81.)
9. Justinian Holden (†),	Harvard,	1740	32	Otis W. Sawin.
10. *Daniel Hoar,	Concord,	1740	11	(A. H. No. 67.)
11. *Joseph Miller,	Newton,	1740	32	Otis W. Sawin.
12. *John Stearns,	Watertown,	1741	41	Wid. Nathan Howard.
13. Joseph Lynde (†),	Malden,	1741	9	(A. H. No. 65.)
14. Jonathan White (†),	Lancaster,	1741	28	Theodore S. Wood.
15. *Joseph Hosley,	Billerica,	1741	38	Betsey Bacon place.
16. *Benjamin Hosley,	Billerica,	1741		
17. Nathan'l Norcross (†),	Watertown,	1742	37	Samuel Bridge.
18. *Samuel Whitney,	Weston,	1742	51	Leander Hartwell.
19. Benjamin Garfield (†),	Waltham,	1742	58	George M. Davis.
20. William Baldwin (†),	Newton,	1742	14	(A. H. No. 66.)
21. Joshua Bigelow,	Watertown,	1742	12	(A. H. No. 68.)
22. *Eliezer Bigelow,	Watertown,	1742	12	(A. H. No. 68.)
23. Daniel Walker,	Sudbury,	1742	82	Isaac Seaver.
24. Isaac Stedman,	Newton,	1742(?)	35	Mrs. W. H. Larrabee.
25. David Dunster,	Cambridge,	1742	10	Edwin L. Burnham.
26. John Hadley (†),	Weston,	1742	5	Estey estate.
27. Joseph Gibbs (†),	Framingham,	1742	102	(A. H. No. 87.)
28. *James Taylor,	Sudbury,	1742(?)	98	(A. H. No. 43.)
29. Joseph Bowman (†),	Lexington,	1742	16	Wm. H. Carter.
30. William Bowman (†),	Lexington,	1742	16	Wm. H. Carter.
31. Isaac Clark (†),		1742		
32. Rev. E. Marsh,	Cambridge,	1742	8	Edward P. Miller.
33. *Abner Holden,	Watertown,	1743	1	(A. H. No. 64.)
34. Joshua Child (†),	Watertown,	1743(?)	23	Ephraim Lufkin.
35. Joshua Church (†),	Lancaster,	1743	74	G. Smith heirs.
36. *Richard Graves,	Sudbury,	1744	58	Geo. M. Davis.
37. Benjamin Wilson (†),	Westboro',	1744	50	C. B. Morse.
38. Asa Flagg (†),		1744	25	Wm. C. Foskett.
39. Benjamin Bellows,	Lunenburg,	1745	78	(A. H. No. 78.)
40. *John Rand,	Bolton,	1747	50	C. B. Morse.
41. John Hoar (†),	Concord,	1748	13	Joseph F. Howard.
42. *Andrew Darby,	Acton,	1748	22	(A. H. No. 81.)
43. Henry Stevens,		1748	112	Geo. W. Merriam.
44. Samuel Gibbs,	Framingham,	1748	20	(A. H. No. 62.)
45. *William Bemis,	Cambridge,	1748	65	Willard F. Battles.
46. *Reuben Miles,	Concord,	1749	14	(A. H. No. 66.)
47. *Noah Miles,	Concord,	1749	36	Wid. Josiah Foster.
48. *John Miles,	Concord,	1749	57	(A. H. No. 80.)
49. *Elisha Bigelow,	Watertown,	1749	18	Rufus J. Lavers.
50. *Moses Stearns,	Watertown,	1749	68	W. H. Evans.
51. *Jacob Warren,	Littleton,	1749	59	(A. H. No. 96.)
52. Obadiah Kendall (†),	Woburn,	1749	39	Wid. Calvin Baker.
53. *Seth Herrington,	Watertown,	1750	23	Ephraim Lufkin.
54. Jonath'n Lawrence (†),	Littleton,	1750	27	W. H. Parks.
55. *David Bemis,	Cambridge,	1750	21	(A. H. No. 61.)
56. *John Brooks,	Acton,	1750	43	(A. H. No. 38.)
57. Timothy Mosman (†),	Sudbury,	1750	16	Wm. H. Carter.





58. *Elijah Gibbs,	Framingham,	1751	2	(A. H. No. 39.)
59. *Benjamin Gould,	Topsfield,	1751	106	(A. H. No. 57.)
60. *Ebenezer Taylor.	Shrewsbury,	1751	49	F. & S. Morse.
61. *Asa Taylor,	Shrewsbury,	1751	49	F. & S. Morse.
62. *Thomas Conant,	Concord,	1751	4	Wid. Phineas Reed.
63. Ebenezer Conant (†),	Concord,	1751	113	(A. H. No. 86.)
64. Ephraim Dutton (†),	Lunenburg,	1751	3	1st Parish Church.
65. *James Walker,	Sudbury,	1751	24	Aspasio H. King.
66. Ephraim Stevens (†),		1751	101	Wm. H. Benjamin.
67. *Nathaniel Sever,	Framingham,	1751	30	Frank A. Taylor.
68. Robert Sever,	Framingham,	1751	70	(A. H. No. 88.)
69. Nathan Whitney,	Waltham,	1751	90	E. & Geo. C. Whitney.
70. Nathan Merriam,	Lexington,	1751	81	D. & J. Harrington.
71. *Thomas Merriam,	Lexington,	1751	84	Otis Flagg.
72. *James Cohee,	Lancaster,	1751	96	Isaac N. Smith.
73. John Sangar,	Watertown,	1751	48	E. L. Martin.
74. *Josiah Cutting,	Watertown,	1751	45	Geo. W. Whitney.
75. *John Woodward,	Nottingham,	1751	7	Susan H. Underwood.
76. *William Edgell,	Lexington,	1751	28	Theo. S. Wood.
77. John Gill,		1751(?)	87	(A. H. No. 100.)
78. *Jonas Winship,	W. Cambr'ge,	1751	46	Wid. W. W. Comee.
79. *Nicholas Dike,	Lunenburg,	1751	74	Geo. Smith heirs.
80. Noah Ashley (†),	Western,	1752	85	Wm. J. Black.
81. Isaac Jackson,	Newton,	1752	92	F. M. Poore.
82. *Josiah Jackson,	Newton,	1752	92	F. M. Poore.
83. *Edmund Bemis,	Cambridge,	1753	66	(A. H. No. 60.)
84. *Ben <sup>n</sup> Butterfield,	Chelmsford,	1753	16	Wm. H. Carter.
85. Michael Bridgen (†),	Charlestown,	1753(?)	70 I. H.	Joshua Liverpool.
86. Samuel Hager (†),	Watertown,	1754(?)	25	Wm. C. Foskett.
87. *Joshua Bigelow,	Watertown,	1754	12	(A. H. No. 68.)
88. Josiah Goodnow (†),	Sudbury,	1754	28	Theo. S. Wood.
89. Nathan Maynard (†),	Sudbury,	1754	27	W. H. Parks.
90. *John Estabrook,	Lexington,	1754	103	Edward C. Estabrook.
91. *Timo Fessenden,	Lexington,	1754	100	Geo. W. Peeler.
92. *John Wheeler,	Acton,	1755	3	1st Parish Church.
93. *Richard Baker,	Concord,	1755	39	Wid. Calvin Baker.
94. *John Foskett,	Bolton,	1755	120	Ambrose E. Weston.
95. Daniel Munjoy,	Cambridge,	1755	56	(A. H. No. 42.)
96. *Nathan Wood,	Sudbury,	1756	28	Theo. S. Wood.
97. *Stephen Calef,	Waltham,	1756	73	(A. H. No. 98.)
98. *Nathan Pierce,	Lexington,	1756	55	D. G. Newcomb.
99. *Josiah Stearns,	Watertown,	1756(?)	91	(A. H. No. 36.)
100. *Edward Joyner,	Lancaster,	1756		
101. *Hubbard Dunster,	Cambridge,	1756	76	(A. H. No. 84.)
102. Ebenezer Darby (†),	Acton,	1757		
103. *Jabez Bigelow,	Watertown,	1757	3	1st Parish Church.
104. *Isaac Dupee,	Reading,	1757	109	Wid. J. J. Dupee.
105. *Paul Gibbs,	Framingham,	1757	20	(A. H. No. 62.)
106. *Richard Newton,		1757	14 2 D.	(A. H. No. 69.)
107. *Jonas Whitney,	Waltham,	1757	81	D. & J. Harrington.
108. Asahel Smith,	Sudbury,	1757(?)	56 2 D.	Edmond T. Smith.
109. *Zacheus Bemis,	Cambridge,	1758	48 2 D.	Alonzo Curtis.
110. Nathan Darby,	Acton,	1758	100 2 D.	M. Miller.
111. *Joseph Spalding,	Chelmsford,	1758	25 2 D.	S. D. Hobbs.
112. Nathaniel Wheeler,	Acton,	1758	48	E. L. Martin.
113. *Nathaniel Merrill,	Pelham, N. H.	1759	116	Melville H. Warner.
114. *John Edgell,	Lexington,	1759	24 2 D.	Leonard M. Gates.
115. *Thomas Dunster,	Cambridge,	1759	117	Elmer Baker.
116. *Josiah Puffer,	Sudbury,	1759	62	R. P. Merriam.
117. *Jonathan Stedman,	Newton,	1759	35	Mrs. W. H. Larrabee.
118. *Gideon Smith (†),	Unknown,	1759(?)		
119. Samuel Harris (†),	Ashburnham,	1759		
120. Gideon Fletcher,	Unknown,	1759		



## CHAPTER VII.

### EARLY MILITARY OPERATIONS.

#### KING GEORGE'S WAR—FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR— NAMES OF SOLDIERS.

FOR more than half a century previous to the settlement of Narragansett No. 2, there had been no aboriginal sons of the forest either upon its territory or in all the neighboring region. The war with King Philip in 1675-6 had resulted in the practical extinction of all the tribes of central and southern New England. A few remnants of those tribes still remained within the boundaries of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, the successors of Eliot's and Mayhew's praying Indians, like the Hassanimiscos at Grafton and the Nonantum at Natick, who had abandoned for the most part their savage ways and settled down into compact, orderly, civilized communities, furnishing no occasion for anxiety or alarm to the white population.

Nevertheless, there was more or less of trouble in the distance, along the eastern and northern frontier, where there still existed large and powerful tribes skilled in all the arts of barbarous warfare, and ready for any marauding expeditions among the growing English settlements, which jealousy, revenge, hate, or self-interest might suggest or inspire. Moreover, in the difficulties which arose from time to time between the English and French colonists in Canada and elsewhere, these tribes were easily induced to enter the service of the latter against the former, under which unholy alliance some of the most horrid atrocities and massacres were occasionally perpetrated. Nor were these incursions and attacks made only upon plantations established along the border, but now and then those more interiorly located were surprised by the unexpected presence of a savage foe in their midst, who repeated the bloody butcheries of former days. Such was the case at Haverhill in 1697, near the close of King William's War, and at Deerfield in 1704, soon after the opening of the conflict between France and England known as Queen Anne's War. After the treaty of Utrecht, however, made in 1713, comparative peace prevailed throughout New England, and little occasion existed for apprehension or alarm in any quarter. As a consequence, the enterprise and ambition of the colonists had pushed their way back from the seaboard and had established a large number of new settlements along the hills and in the valleys of the inland territory—the germs of what were to be in after years some of





the most flourishing towns and cities of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In the midst of this general tranquility, when there were no threatening portents in the sky and no known cause for distrust or apprehension, the township under review was first settled.

For several years all went on well. But at length troubles arose again between England and France, and though they originated in disputes relating to the kingdom of Austria, yet were they transferred to these shores and made the occasion here of hostile demonstrations and finally of open conflict. Some time before war was actually declared between the two governments in the year 1744, there were indications of disturbance on this side the water, and it was deemed wise in view of the probable rupture, in which the Indians would be engaged as allies of the French, to take certain precautionary measures, with special reference to the safety of the more exposed of the interior settlements of the Province. Some of the smaller and less important of these were temporarily abandoned, while others were put in a condition of protection and defense. In anticipation of coming trouble, the inhabitants of Narragansett No. 2, and of similar communities, petitioned the general court for aid in preparing to meet it when it should appear. The legislature answered the petition as follows:

"WHEREAS it appears necessary from the Apprehensions of this House have of a speedy Rupture between the crowns of Great Britain and France that the Inland Frontiers in this Province be put in a better posture of Defence, Therefore

*"Voted,* that the following sums be and hereby are granted to be paid out of the publick Treasury to be laid out in some of the settlements in the County of Middlesex, viz:—To the west Precinct of Groton, £33 6s. 8d.; To Townshend £66 13s. 4d.;—In the County of Worcester, viz:—To Lunenburg and Leominster between them £66 13s. 4d.; To Narragansett No. 2, £100; To Pequog, £100; To Nichaway, £100; To New Rutland, £100;—And in the County of Hampshire, To New Salem, £100. All of which sums shall be taken out of the £7000 Appropriation provided by the Supply Bill now before this Court, and shall be paid into the hands of Messrs. Samuel Willard, William Lawrence, and James Minot, with such as the honorable Council shall join as a Committee fully authorized and empowered to receive the same, and (first taking counsel of the Captain General) to lay out in the most prudent manner in erecting in each of the before-named settlements for their security during the war a Garrison or Garrisons of stockades or of square Timber around some dwelling House or Houses or otherwise as will be most for the Security and Defence of the whole Inhabitants of each Place—the Committee as near as may be to proportion the Expense to the Sums hereby granted and the overplus (if any be) to be returned into the Province Treasury—the committee to be accountable and to produce vouchers that they may have paid for the Charge of said Fortifications (as well for the material as for the Workmen employed) in Bills of Credit. Provided, nevertheless, That if the Apprehensions of War be over before the money be laid out, what remains shall be returned into the Treasury there to lie for the further order of this Court. Sent up for Concurrence Nov. 11, 1743.

"In Council Read and Concurred and Joseph Wilder and Joseph Dwight Esqs. are joined in the affair. Consented to W. SHIRLEY."



Similar forts were authorized and provided for at Bernardston, Coleraine, Blandford, Stockbridge, Sheffield, and New Hampton.

By means of this and similar appropriations made about the same time, a line of defenses was built extending from the more thickly populated sections of the Province to the westward and in the rear and midst of exposed settlements for their protection and safety. Moreover, a series of alarms was arranged and established, whereby an attack made upon any one point could be at once reported all along the line, and the whole population in the outlying districts be aroused and enabled to be put in condition to meet and overcome the invader. This complete investment and defense of the young townships gave those residing in them a happy sense of security, and no doubt prevented many a bloody catastrophe and consequent abandonment of new enterprises, like what occurred at Brookfield, Lancaster, Mendon, and other places seventy years before.

The fortifications erected in Narragansett No. 2, under the order of the General Court quoted, were, if we may rely upon the testimony of Mr. Hudson who had means of information upon this and other matters not now accessible, ten in number, located at the following points, to wit:—one at the dwelling of Capt. Daniel Hoar, near Mt. Pleasant Cemetery; one at Rev. Mr. Marsh's, a few rods east of the present residence of E. P. Miller, on the old common; one at Dea. Joseph Holden's, near the old Baptist meetinghouse site; one at Seth Walker's, the late John K. Learned place; one at Dea. Joseph Miller's, where Otis W. Sawin now resides; one at Richard Graves', a few rods southwest of the house of Geo. M. Davis; one at Thomas Stearns', for many years the residence of Job Seaver; one at Samuel Hager's, now William C. Foskett's; one at Philip Bemis', a few rods north of where George Harris now lives; and one at Joseph Gibbs', on the lot now represented by Wm. H. Benjamin, probably half a mile east of his residence. These defenses were sometimes constructed of hewn timbers laid one above another, locked together at the corners and firmly spiked, according to the ancient style of building log houses; and sometimes they were in the form of stockades, being composed of logs standing perpendicularly, with the lower end planted strongly in the earth. In the latter case, they enclosed a considerable area of ground with a dwelling house upon it. All together they were capable of holding the entire population of the township, which, at that time, could not have numbered more than a hundred or a hundred and twenty persons, and which, in view of the fact that the forts were scattered generally throughout the settlement, could be collected in them at a few moments' notice. Besides these more substantial structures, there were other smaller places of refuge and defense in still exposed localities for workmen employed away from their





dwelling, or for any one suddenly surprised. In times of special danger the people at large gathered at night in the garrisons, where a guard was set to give alarm if necessary, while an armed patrol kept watch and ward by day at favorable points, to discover the approach of the stealthy foe and prevent concealed attack. No doubt that for several years the people of this little settlement suffered immeasurably through fear of Indian assault and horrid massacre. An occasional appearance of the savage red man skulking in the forest, or the discovery of some tokens of his presence in the vicinity, served to keep that fear alive and intensify its power, to disturb and agonize the tender susceptibilities of the heart. It was a time of weariness and terror that can not be described, when workmen in the fields felt obliged, for their own safety, to keep their loaded muskets near at hand, and when devout worshippers, for the same reason, bent the knee in prayer in the sanctuary with guns by their side and an armed sentinel before the door.

"It is impossible," says Mr. Hudson in his centennial address, "for us at this day to enter fully into the feelings of people thus circumstanced. If immediate destruction, or what is worse, a death by torture or hopeless captivity, did not actually take place, it was constantly haunting their imaginations. Painful indeed must be the situation when the laborer is liable to be captured in the field and his family massacred and scalped in his absence; and when the hours of darkness and repose may invite the enemy, and his slumbers may be broken by the sound of the war-whoop, and the darkness of night be dispelled by the blaze of his dwelling."

For a time after the construction of the garrisons referred to, the labor and expense of keeping them properly manned and of maintaining the requisite guard, were mostly borne by the inhabitants of the place, but after a few years, the burden of perpetual vigilance, which taxed so severely their time and strength and consequently imperiled the means of subsistence for themselves and their families, became so great, even though the province had furnished a few soldiers to aid them in their danger, that a petition for relief was sent to the general court, in form following, to wit:

"To his Excellency William Shirley Esq. &c. in General Court assembled att Boston the 5th day of April Anno Domini 1748.

"The humble petition of the Inhabitate of Narraganset No. 2, sheweth, That we your petitioners Labour under difficultyes by reason of the war by which we are very much retarded and Discouraged in our Settlement. We Humbly Concieve also that the Soldiers already granted for the Defence of this place are Insofficient to gard the Inhabitate about their business the ensuing summer, and Especialy so if the enemy prove troubellsome amongst us, we would also Humbly Informe your Exy and Hon<sup>rs</sup> that there are many of our young men will be Nessecesitated to Leave their Settlements and seek their bread elsewhere if not prevented by this Hon<sup>ble</sup> Court. Therefore we y<sup>r</sup> pet<sup>rs</sup> Humbly pray your Exy and Hon<sup>rs</sup> would take our Circumstances into your wise and serious Consideration and grant a number of the





Inhabitation to be under province pay as a town Scout which we humbly Conceive will be mostly Serviseable not only to the Inhabitation for their Support but also for the Safety and Defence of the place and province if kept upon Strict Duty and also an effectuall means to prevent the Inhabitation from leaving the Settlement and your petitioners (as in duty bound) shall ever pray. Signed by

"JOSEPH HOLDEN,  
HENRY STEVENS,  
JOSEPH HOLDEN, JR.,  
ISAAC STEDMAN,  
ABNER HOLDEN."

PHILIP BEMIS,  
STEPHEN HOLDEN,  
JOSEPH GIBBS,  
ELEAZER BIGELOW,

DAVID DUNSTER,  
WILLIAM BEMIS,  
THOMAS BEMIS,  
JOSEPH HORSLEY,

In response to this petition, Thomas Stearns, David Dunster, Joseph Holden, Jr., Stephen Holden, and Elisha Bigelow were appointed, commissioned, and empowered to act as scouts under pay by the direction and authority of the provincial government, until the peril was past.

The exigency of the situation was recognized in the neighboring settlements, and appeals from other sources were made to the legislature for more adequate protection against threatening danger. Col. Samuel Willard of Lancaster, who was in command of the Fourth Massachusetts regiment, and kept a vigilant watch of the course of events with a view to the safety and welfare of the frontier population, interposed in their behalf at the same session of the general court, as did Joseph Holden and others of Narragansett No. 2, in a memorial still preserved at the State House, Boston.

That the precautions sought were not unnecessary is evidenced by what transpired shortly afterward in the then adjacent town of Lunenburg, now within the boundaries of Ashby, as detailed in the subjoined extract from "The Boston Weekly News Letter" of July 14, 1748:

"Last Tuesday was Sev' night [July 5] about 30 or 40 of the Enemy came upon a garrison'd House at the Out-Skirts of Lunenburgh, and two Soldiers posted there were both kill'd near the Garrison, one being knock'd on the head, the other shot thro' the Body as he was endeavoring to escape. The Master of the House, Mr. John Fitch, 'tis tho't was siez'd by them in the Field, as he was spreading Hay, and his Wife as she was bringing Water from the Spring, about 20 Rods Distance, a Pail and her Bonnet being found near the Path; The House they set on fire and burnt it to the Ground and the Body of one of the slain Soldiers lay so near thereto that the Head was burnt from the shoulders. The neighboring Towns being soon alarmed, above 40 men muster'd and got upon the Spot before Sundown, but the Enemy had withdrawn; however they kept a strict Watch and Guard all night and just about Dawn of the next Day, they heard a noise among the Bushes which they suppos'd to be some of the Enemy that were left as Spies, who, perceiving the Number that came against them, skulk'd away without being discovered. Mr. Fitch his Wife and 5 Children being missing 'tis concluded they were taken Prisoners by the Enemy."

That conclusion proved to be correct. The whole family were held in captivity several months, when Mr. Fitch and the children returned in safety, the wife and mother dying from privation and exposure on the way home, on the 24th of the



following December. It was to this circumstance that the city of Fitchburg is indebted for its name.

In the same issue of the *Boston News Letter* as that containing the account just quoted, appeared, in connection therewith, the following item, which is more closely related to the character and purpose of this work, to wit:

"Last Thursday [July 7, 1748.] a Man at Lunenburg was waylaid and shot at by some Indians, as was also another at Township No. 2, but both happily escap'd."

The only other known allusion to the fact that Indians appeared here at the time just stated is found in a "Journal of the March of Capt. Ephraim Wilder of Lancaster in July 1748," made by order of Col. Samuel Willard already named, as follows:

"July 8. In Marching to Naragansitt No. 2 and in Searching After the Indens that was the Same day discovered there."

It is possible, though by no means certain, that the incident referred to in these last paragraphs was the same as that detailed in the following story, first published by Hon. Charles Hudson, who speaks of it as "well authenticated":

"Mr. William Bowman, who owned the former George Miles place, was one day mowing in a field lying evidently in the southern part of his lot when he caught a glimpse of red men in the neighboring wood. They were in a position to effectually cut him off from Capt. Hoar's fort, where he probably spent his nights, and no doubt felt sure of their victim. He was wise and self-possessed enough to conceal from them a knowledge of the fact that he had seen them, and kept on at his work, moving slowly away from them and also away from the place of safety to which they might naturally suppose he would attempt to fly, when made aware of their presence. Reaching the lower extremity of his field, which was in the direction of the pond, where possibly he was hidden from their view for the moment by some intervening knoll or swell of land, he dropped his scythe and made for the stronghold at Richard Graves', a mile or more distant, with such speed as to escape the clutches of his fleet-footed pursuers. Alarm guns were fired which awakened an immediate response, not only from different parts of the settlement, but from other settlements not far away, resulting in bringing troops from Lancaster and Rutland to aid those on the ground in repelling any attack that might be made. No conflict, however, ensued, as the Indians, finding that they had been discovered, and were probably outnumbered, quietly withdrew."

Another occurrence of the same nature, resting for authority upon a tradition in the family concerned, is that Elizabeth, wife of Philip Bemis, on her way from church one Sunday afternoon, saw Indians skulking in the shrubbery and underbrush of the woods near the old burying ground. Concealing her fear and hastening to her well-fortified home, half a mile distant, she caused an alarm to be given, with the same bloodless denouement as before narrated.

The most important military exploit on these shores during the conflict referred to, which was known as "King George's





War," was the siege and capture of Louisburg on the island of Cape Breton. At that place was a gigantic fortress built by the French thirty years before, at an expense of five and a half million dollars. There, numerous privateers, which were plying their nefarious trade in the neighboring waters, doing great mischief to the fishing and other maritime interests of the English realm, sought and found refuge, rendering the stronghold particularly obnoxious to all who deemed those interests of any worth. Among these was Governor Shirley of Massachusetts, who, largely upon his own responsibility, fitted and sent out an expedition against it, which, under Col. William Pepperell, resulted in its surrender June 28, 1745, after an investment of forty-nine days. In this undertaking were Mr. Robert Sever, a subsequent resident of Narragansett No. 2, as heretofore signified, and two of his sons.

The treaty of Aix La Chapelle, signed in October, 1748, which brought this conflict to a nominal end, did not secure at once a termination of hostilities or allay the fears of the colonists, who still continued to raise troops for impending emergencies. In these activities this township was interested as the records show. In the muster roll of Capt. Edward Hartwell's company, dated Dec. 22, 1748, appear the names of Fairbanks Moor, Jr., Abner Holden, Wm. Bemis, Ephraim Dutton, Nicholas Dyke, Thomas Stearns, and Ephraim Stearns (Stevens), all residents here. Besides these, it is stated, there were others whose names were not given, and whose identity can not be determined. It does not appear, however, that these men were called into active service.

Gradually peace and order were restored and for a few years there was no outbreak and no particular disturbance among the colonists. But this state of tranquility was not of long continuance. The English colonies increased with marked rapidity in all directions, becoming, as time went on, more jealous of their rights and more conscious of their power to take possession of and maintain them. The French, too, were extending their discoveries and multiplying their settlements and setting up their claims to territorial possessions which the English were by no means ready to grant. It was impossible but that there should be, on these grounds, not simply differences, but sooner or later collision and war,—“the arbitrament of the sword.” How it all came about, and with what result, the histories in our libraries and schools, accessible to every one in these times, tell in all necessary detail of circumstance and incident, and the ground need not be gone over in these pages. Only the most salient points will be noted.

In 1750, the Ohio Company, as it was called, composed of gentlemen of wealth and standing in Virginia, was formed, receiving an act of incorporation from the British parliament, and a grant of immense tracts of land in the Ohio valley. In



taking possession of those lands, setting up on them trading posts and otherwise using them for their advantage, these gentlemen were brought into conflict with the French military authorities established upon or in close contiguity to them.

An attempt on the part of Dinwiddie, royal governor of Virginia, to reconcile the hostile parties and secure a settlement of existing difficulties by peaceful means, first brought George Washington to the notice of the world, and prepared the way for future developments in the career of that wonderful man. Failing in this, the way was opened for more violent measures, for armed resistance and open war.

A vigorous campaign, beginning with an expedition from Virginia under Washington, which resulted in the surrender of Fort Necessity to the French De Villiers, July 4, 1754, and ending in the inglorious defeat of the British general, Braddock, July 9, 1755, effected little towards determining the mastery of the disputed territory or the final issue of the conflict. Hence, in May, 1756, war was again declared between the two nations—foremost at that day on the face of the globe, and claiming to be most Christian of all beside. Then came a more determined policy and a more extensive system of operations, attended with occasional defeats, but more frequently with substantial triumphs to the British and colonial forces, which gradually advanced to the mastery of the continent. Little was done, however, on either side in 1757; in 1758, Louisburg, which for some unknown reason had been surrendered to the French in the adjustment of 1748, was recaptured, and Fort du Quesne was permanently occupied. Crown Point and Ticonderoga surrendered in August, 1759, and Quebec in September, which virtually decided the conflict. The following year Montreal, seeing the folly of further resistance, capitulated; then Detroit and other places held by the French, until victory was complete. The war was practically ended, although the treaty of peace was not formally signed for nearly three years. The conflict, known in history as the "French and Indian War," had been long and severe, and there was great rejoicing throughout the colonies when it was brought to a successful issue. Many valuable lives had been sacrificed and the cost in money had amounted to £70,000,000 sterling.

A considerable number of men from Narragansett No. 2 were engaged in the service during the continuance of hostilities. In the old muster rolls in the archives of the state of Massachusetts, at Boston, appear numerous items of information which are very appropriately transferred to these pages. They are quoted as they stand in the record, without any attempt to fill any vacancies or to explain any discrepancies that may exist in them.

In the list of soldiers under Capt. Jonathan Greenough of Marlboro', Colonel Whitcomb's regiment, raised February,



1756, is the name of Benjamin Gould, who is credited to Narragansett No. 2.

In the company of Benjamin Ballard of Lancaster, colonel not named, enlisted at the same time, is John Monroe from Narragansett No. 2, vouched for by Rev. Mr. Marsh.

In the company of the same captain, raised a year later, are Ebenezer Darby, John Monroe, and Joseph Gibbs, from the same place.

In the company of Timothy Houghton, Newton, raised February, 1757, is Benjamin Gould again.

In the regiment of Colonel Bagley was a company of ninety-eight men enrolled from Lancaster and vicinity for the reduction of Canada, and put in command of Capt. Asa Whitcomb of that town. Among the number were Jabez Bigelow and Asa Taylor, credited to "No. 2", also of Eli Keyes, Jr., of Shrewsbury, afterwards a resident here. They were in the service from March to December, 1758.

In the roll of the company of James Reed, recruited at Brookfield, May, 1758, appear the following names from Narragansett No. 2: Samuel Sanderson, Henry Stephens, Jonathan Stedman, Philip Bemis, Thomas Dunster, Timothy Stearns, Nicholas Dike, Jonathan White, Joseph Horsley, Joseph Horsley, Jr.

In what seems to be the same list, found in another connection, is the name of John Woodward.

In Asa Whitcomb's company, recruited February, 1759, are found Jabez Bigelow, Benjamin Gould, and Asa Taylor.

In a company raised the same year for the regiment of Oliver Wilder, the name of the captain not given, and sent to aid in the conquest of Canada, were Benjamin Gould, Gideon Fletcher, Jonathan Stedman, William Stedman, Joseph Horsley, Jr., Andrew Darby, Samuel Harris, Edward Joyner.

In the company of James Reed, enlisted April, 1759, were Jonathan Stedman, John Martin, Edward Joyner, John Hadley, Benjamin Gould, Benjamin Gould, Jr., Jedediah Cooper.

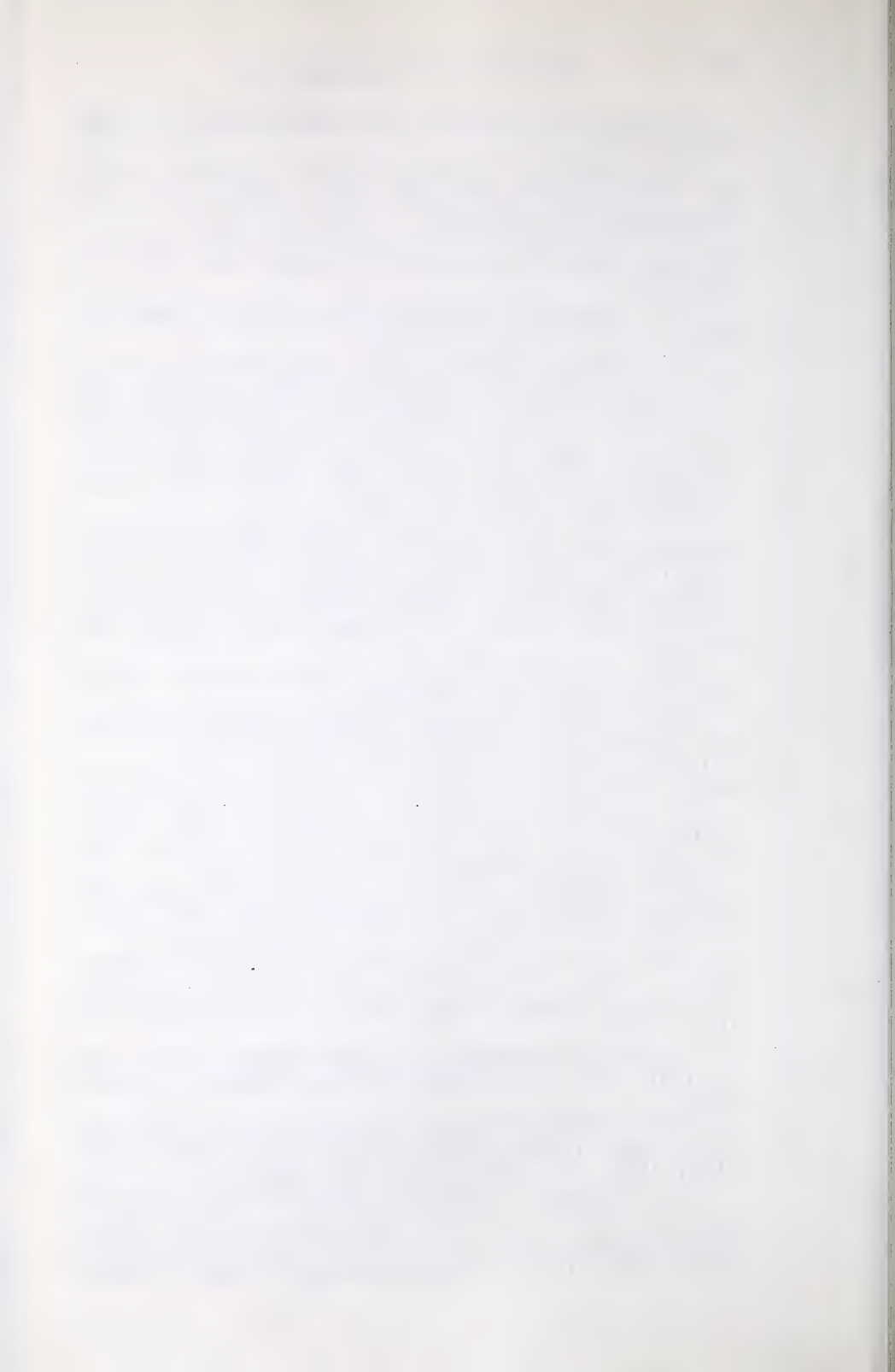
In James Reed's company, a year later, were Jedediah Cooper, Andrew Darby, Benjamin Gould, Joseph Horsley, Ebenezer Hart, Edward Joyner, William Stedman, Samuel Harris, Jonathan Stedman.

In a company commanded by Thomas Beaman, raised Feb. 11, 1761, were John Woodward, Thomas Dunster, Benjamin Gould.

In the company of James Reed, raised March, 1762, were Elijah Sever, Joseph Horsley, Jr., Benjamin Horsley, Joseph Miller, Josiah Sever, William Stedman, Josiah Wheeler.

In the company of the same captain, Benjamin Ruggles' regiment, without date, were Joseph Bailey, Jedediah Cooper, Joseph Chapline, Andrew Darby, Jr., Joseph Horsley, Edward Joyner, Gideon Fletcher, Jonathan Stedman, William Stedman.





The above are the names of all the men who enlisted into the service during the war under notice, that are to be found in the office of the secretary of the state, at Boston. Very likely there were others who failed of getting a place in the records. No names of impressed soldiers appear at all, though it is known that impressments took place. Of three such soldiers, the following well-authenticated story is told.

In the year 1758, Richard Baker and William Edgell, with others perhaps, were drafted into the service for twelve months. At the expiration of the time, the officer in command for some unexplained reason refused to discharge them. Considering themselves under no obligation to remain longer, the two named, with Thomas Dunster, also in the service, decided to take the matter in their own hands and return home regardless of the military authorities. They were in the neighborhood of Lake George, and the only way to their families and friends was over the Green Mountain range and through dense and extensive forests. The roads were few and far between, and even what there were, they deemed it advisable to avoid, lest, being followed, they be the more easily found, captured, and made to suffer a deserter's doom. Moreover, it was mid-winter, when a great depth of snow was on the ground, and the proposed journey across the trackless waste was not only dreary but most perilous. Nevertheless, they were determined to undertake it, and, providing themselves with two pairs of snowshoes, all they could secure, and two boards which were to serve for a third pair, together with such supplies of food as were readily accessible to them, they started on their adventurous course. Ere they had gone far they lost their way and wandered about for some days among the mountains, without reaching any settlement on the other side, as they had hoped, or any track, or signs of a track, leading to a settlement. Their provisions at length gave out and they seemed likely to die by starvation. In their extremity, they jointly agreed that one of their number should be sacrificed to save the lives of the other two, the unfortunate victim to be determined by lot. Happily, before the time arrived for putting their fearful resolve into execution, the barking of a dog assured them of their nearness to some human habitation, and they were spared the dire necessity of committing the contemplated tragic deed. They soon found food, shelter, and rest for their wearied, famishing frames, and in due time arrived safely at their place of destination. There is a tradition, according to which a large party was involved in this occurrence, but it lacks the confirmation with which the given narrative is sustained, and probably grew out of what is here related.

It is also stated, upon authority deemed reliable, that, during one of the campaigns of this war, Nicholas Dike, whose name appears in the foregoing lists, afterward a leading citizen of the



township and a colonel in the Revolutionary struggle, accompanied by a squad of twelve men, having been detached to procure wood for his camp, was surprised and captured with his entire party by a corps of French soldiery. On the way to headquarters the whole company halted to partake of the contents of their knapsacks. In the midst of their eating and drinking, when the captors seemed to have relaxed their watchfulness somewhat and to be resting quite at their ease, the prisoners, who had been partially unbound for the time being, upon a preconcerted signal from Captain Dike, released themselves still further, sprung to their feet, seized the weapons near at hand, rushed upon and overpowered their foes before they could rally in their own defense, securing them as prisoners of war and bringing them in triumph to the headquarters of the English commander.

In the campaign of 1759, Timothy Heywood, then of Shrewsbury but afterward a prominent citizen of Westminster, enlisted in a company of the army which was sent under General Amherst to capture Ticonderoga and Crown Point, on the way to Quebec. During the delay at the first-named place, he was taken sick and was obliged to be left behind, when the advance was made therefrom. How he fared and how he finally reached home is indicated in a petition sent by his father, Phineas Heywood of Shrewsbury, the following year, 1760, to "His Excellency Francis Bernard Captain General and the Hon<sup>ble</sup> the General Court" praying "to be allowed £8 3s. 8d. for expense of sending to Crown Point in the Expedition against Canada for his son Timothy who was sick and unable to get home and was found in a pining and languishing condition, being almost pined away to skin and bones," etc. The court gave his request favorable consideration, granting him £3 6s. 8d.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS—Part One.

#### EARLY APPROPRIATIONS—THE FIRST MEETINGHOUSE— MINISTRY OF REV. ELISHA MARSH.

THE religious character of the founders of New England, known wherever the Puritan name is mentioned, has been sufficiently portrayed in a preceding chapter. The purpose of establishing a pure church on these shores, and an order of civil society in which they could worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, was ever in their minds and shaped their whole policy and career. And their children and children's children partook of the same spirit and pursued the same line of conduct. So thoroughly convinced were they of the essential importance of religious institutions to the prosperity, welfare, and happiness of any community or people, that, for generations, no assignment of lands was made by the colonial or provincial government for establishing a new settlement or township, without making due and adequate provision for such institutions. It will be remembered that the territory of Narragansett No. 2 was granted on the expressly specified condition that those receiving it should, within seven years from the date of the action of the general court, "Settle Sixty families *with a learned orthodox Minister,*" and in dividing the territory, also "lay out a lot for Said Settled Minister and one for the Ministry."

Nor were the proprietors and first settlers on that territory at all averse to, but heartily in favor of, fulfilling that condition to the very letter. They were in full sympathy with the motive and conviction which required it. Those who located here in the beginning were without exception, so far as is known, religious people. They desired what they called "Gospel privileges and ordinances for themselves and their children" at the earliest possible date. And their desire in this regard was soon fulfilled. For it had been anticipated, and action had been taken looking to the accomplishment of the object sought, according to the requirements of the grant of the provincial legislature, as has been already partially indicated.

At a meeting of the standing committee of the propriety held Dec. 28, 1733, convened for the purpose of putting the lands, of which full possession had been gained, in proper condition for permanent settlement, it was ordered that the dividing committee, among the several duties required of them, should "propose a



place for erecting a meeting house and then Lay out a Sufficiency of Land for said meeting house, a Training Field and A Burying Place not exceeding Ten Acres, and then proceed to Lay out for the first Settled Minister a Lott and one Lott for the Ministry,"—that is, for the benefit of the township in the support of the ministry,—and this was accordingly done. On the 9th of July following, this action was approved by the whole body of proprietors, and lot No. 8 was set apart for the first settled minister, and No. 95 for a ministerial lot as heretofore stated.

In furtherance of the same object and with commendable promptness, within nine months of the time when the first inhabitant appeared in the township, and when there were only fifteen persons within its borders, on the 23d of November, 1737, the proprietors voted to build a meetinghouse "as soon as conveniently they can," and they also

*"Voted, that the said meetinghouse shall be Built fourty-five foot long Thirty five foot wide and Twenty one foot Stud and also that said meetinghouse be Raised the out Side covered and the Roof Shingled on or before the first day of June in the year 1739."*

Capt. Joseph Bowman, Mr. James Hayes, and Mr. Benjamin Brown were chosen a committee to have charge of the work. A tax of £3 10s. on each right was ordered to meet the expense involved in the votes passed, and Capt. William Richardson, Mr. Benjamin Wellington, and Mr. John Cutting were appointed assessors to levy the said tax. Five persons were also chosen to collect it and pay it over to the treasurer. By later records it appears that Mr. John Damon, probably great grandfather of the venerable Thomas Damon now living, and Nathan(?) Parker, both of Reading, were the contractors for the erection of the proposed structure.

On the 8th of September, 1738, the proprietors made the first appropriation for the establishment and maintenance of public worship. It was in the form of a vote "to allow to such of the proprietors as are Setled and preparing to Setle in Said Township the Sum of Thirty pounds to hire some Sutable person to preach the Gosple among them in Said Township from this Time till the first of June next," which was the date fixed for the completion of the work on the meetinghouse, so far as was provided for. On the 20th of the following December an additional sum of thirty pounds was voted "towards the support of preaching the Gospel in Said Township till June next." The religious services thus authorized must have taken place in the little dwellings of one or another of the four residents, or perhaps in each of them by turns, as convenience would allow.

The meetinghouse seems to have been erected and made ready for occupancy as ordered, and on the 6th of June, 1739, was publicly dedicated to God by formal and appropriate exer-



cises. The sermon on the occasion was preached by Rev. Isaac Richardson of Woburn, who, with others, had previously conducted services of worship in the township, his text being taken from Haggai 2: 9: "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace." Of other participants in this interesting and eventful ceremonial nothing has been learned.

Let us imagine that little sanctuary in the wilderness—not a neat, well-proportioned, commanding edifice, like either of those that now adorn the central village of the town, attracting the worshipper not only by their external appearance but by their well-cushioned slips and elaborate internal conveniences and appointments, but a rude, barn-like structure, scarcely larger than a common country schoolhouse, covered with rough boards and coarse shingles, or what served for shingles, without a pulpit or a seat, excepting plain benches, or what was brought in or in some way improvised for temporary use. A small affair it was to the outward sense, yet it was of great moment to the little settlement and of immense symbolic meaning. It spoke to the inner ear of better things than earth can give, of higher interests than those of time, of grander possibilities and happier destinies than pertain to mortal being here below. The undying soul, the everlasting law, duty, immortality, Christ, God, and heaven,—these were all typified and represented in that rude house of worship mid the wilds of Narragansett No. 2.

The building stood on the northerly side of the old common, a few rods west of the brick house, the present residence of Geo. S. Ham, formerly known as the Emerson place. Though at the date spoken of it was so far completed as to warrant its dedication to the uses for which it was designed, and to allow the holding of meetings in it afterward, yet it was by no means in a satisfactory condition; probably in no wise suitable for occupancy during the more inclement portions of the year.

Accordingly, at a meeting of the proprietors held Oct. 31st of the same year, an attempt was made to have it finished or rendered more comfortable, but without avail. A grant of £60 was, however, secured for preaching the gospel till the 1st of May next, and on the 5th of December the standing committee was instructed to provide for the same and to draw on the treasurer for money in payment therefor.

On the 10th of September, 1740, the question of finishing the meetinghouse came up in due order, whereupon it was

*"Voted, to Build a Pulpit Deacon's Seat and Body of Seats on the Floor, leaving sufficient Room for Pews and Stairs to go into the Gallery.*

*"Voted to Ciel the Meeting House with lime and boards throughout."*

A tax of £100 was ordered for the purpose of defraying the expense of the proposed improvements, and a committee con-





sisting of Nathan Parker, Joseph Holden, and Jonathan Weston was appointed to superintend the work. A grant of £60 was made for the supply of preaching till the first of the following June.

On the 2d of June, 1741, the same sum was voted for six months' preaching, and for the payment of about twelve pounds already expended for the same object in excess of what had been raised.

From these several votes and similar ones subsequently passed, it is manifest that from almost the very beginning of the settlement of the township, the privileges of public Christian worship were enjoyed within its borders with a great degree of regularity throughout the year. No records of the meetings were probably kept, except, it may be, by those officiating as preachers; and these, if they ever existed, have all disappeared. No formal list of the ministers has been found. Yet the names of some of them have been ascertained by examining the books of some of the early treasurers, in which there are items as follows:—

" Paid to Mr. Isaac Richardson for preaching . . .	£ 3. 0. 0.
Paid to Mr. Buckman, in part of his Order . . .	10. 0. 0.
Paid to Mr. Jabez Richardson for preaching & Bording . . .	20. 0. 0.
Paid Mr. Samuel Kendall in part for preaching . . .	32. 0. 0.
Paid to Mr. Josiah Brown for preaching . . .	3. 10. 0."

Of these several persons who served from time to time as a transient supply at that early period, nothing is known, except that Mr. Isaac Richardson was settled at Woburn, and Mr. Samuel Kendall, the great, great, great uncle of the present town clerk, at New Salem.

The desirableness and importance of having a permanent minister, agreeably to the terms of the grant of the township, at length became so manifest as to prompt to definite action in the matter. Possibly some of the gentlemen named, and others, perhaps, had virtually, if not formally, been regarded as "candidates" for the sacred office. The first record in regard to the subject appears under date of Dec. 2, 1741, when, pursuant to an article in the advertisement calling a meeting of the proprietors, it was

"*Voted*, to proceed to the Settling a Minister in Said Township as soon as may be with Conveniency.

"*Voted* to choose a Committee to bring forward the Settling said minister & Treat with Gentlemen to Preach with them and made choice of Mr. Joseph Holden, Mr. farebanks Moor and Mr. Thomas Stearns."

Eighty-seven pounds were also appropriated to pay a deficiency in the previous year's grant, and "to carry on the preaching" to the first of June next, and a tax was ordered to be raised and paid into the treasury before the first of March, in order that said vote might be made effectual.



The duty of securing candidates for the ministerial office seems to have been properly attended to by the parties to whom that responsibility had been assigned. Among those employed was a young man who had recently completed his studies at Cambridge, where he was still residing, and who seemed to find favor with the people of the place. On the 4th of August, 1742, they made formal choice of this young man, Mr. Elisha Marsh, and preferred a petition to the proprietors at large for their concurrence therein.

At a meeting held by said proprietors on the first day of September following, it was

"Putt to vote wether the Proprietors will Concur with the Inhabitation Proprietors in Their Choice of Mr. Elisha Marsh to be their Minister, and it Passed in the affirmative unanimously.

"Voted to Give Mr. Elisha Marsh forty five pounds Current Money anuely while [until] the General Court Set them of to be a township.

"Voted to Give Mr Elisha Marsh three hundred Pounds old tenor for his Settlement.

"Voted that there be £60 granted for the Charges of the ordination.

"Voted and Choose Mr. Holden and Mr farrbanks More and Elezer bigalow to Provid for said ordination.

"Voted by the proprietors that the ordination of Mr. Marsh be on the 20 Day of october next.

"Voted that there be a Tax of 4 pounds Old Tenour Raised on Each Right for the Ministers Settlement and his first year's Salary."

The actual value of the sums of money offered to Mr. Marsh, in U. S. currency, was about \$150 for the annual salary and not far from \$125 for a settlement,—a gratuity given at the beginning of a minister's work in a pastorate, according to the custom of the time.

At the same meeting it was also

"Voted that Mr Demmon and Mr Parker be allowed £20 old Tenour for bulding the meeting House in Considering his Lose."

The action of the proprietors in regard to calling Mr. Marsh to settle as minister of the township was immediately communicated to him, eliciting the following favorable reply, the original of which has recently come to light:

"To the Proprietors of the Township called Narraganset No. Two—Gentlemen: Having received an Invitation from You to Settle in ye Gospel Ministry w<sup>h</sup> ye Inhabitants in ye Township aboves<sup>d</sup>, (said Inhabitants having before given me a Like Invitation.) It is not without Seriously Considering The Same that I now Let you know That I Accept your Invitation. Depending, Gentl<sup>m</sup> upon your honor and Generosity further to add to ye Settlement and Salary w<sup>t</sup> will be Sufficient for my honorable Support, and Humbly depending on ye promised presence of ye Great Head of ye Church to Enable me rightfully and faithfully to discharge ye Duties of y<sup>t</sup> most Important Trust to be Committed to me. And that I may have Grace to Save my own soul and ye Souls of Those y<sup>t</sup> hear me.

"Harvard College In Cambridge, Sept. 2, 1742. ELISHA MARSH."





The ordination of Mr. Marsh took place agreeably to the vote of the proprietors on the 20th of October, 1742. No records of the occasion have been found, but from collateral authorities it appears that the sermon was preached by Rev. William Cook of East Sudbury (now Wayland), and was afterwards printed. Mr. Cook, no doubt, was a personal friend of Mr. Marsh, and it is probable that they were in theological sympathy with each other. It may, therefore, throw some light upon subsequent events in the experience of Mr. Marsh and the people of the township, to state that about this time the tendency to Arminian or more liberal views manifested itself in the New England ministry and church in opposition to the sterner Calvinism that had previously prevailed, and that Mr. Cook, a man of more than usual ability, according to the testimony of one of his successors at East Sudbury, belonged to the "new school" of thought and doctrine, much to the horror and grief of his stricter brethren. So pronounced was he in his opinions, and so obnoxious were those opinions to some of the clergymen of his time that, at his funeral, the officiating minister, one of his opponents in the controversy that had arisen, taking for a text the supplicatory phrase "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion," began his sermon by saying that "God does good unto Zion by removing ungodly ministers," at which declaration the people, who sincerely revered and loved their departed pastor, were not only greatly shocked, but exceedingly indignant, although the discourse was, on the whole, commendatory to Mr. Cook as a man, and of his work in his chosen calling.

Inasmuch as Mr. Marsh was the first minister of the township and held a responsible position for many years in the community, it seems proper that a brief sketch of his lineage and early life should be given at this point as introductory to a somewhat detailed account of his experience in Narragansett No. 2, and subsequent career. Several distinct families by the name of Marsh came to this country early in its history, all of whom are supposed to have been descendants of one Marisco, a Frenchman, or possibly a Spaniard, who passed over to and settled in England several generations before. Among these immigrants was one John Marsh, born in 1609, who first came to Hartford, Conn., in 1635, and lived there till 1660, when he joined the young and prosperous settlement at Hadley in this state. He married Anne, daughter of John Webster, then governor of the Connecticut colony. This John had a son Daniel, born about 1653, who married and settled in Hadley, and who had among other children, Ebenezer, born April 22, 1688. Ebenezer married Mary Parsons, of whom was born May 27, 1713, Elisha, the subject of this notice. Little has been ascertained of his early life. The registries of Harvard College show that he entered that institution in 1734, when twenty-one years of age, and graduated in the class of 1738. He studied



theology, though with whom and under what auspices is not known, and seems to have been residing at Cambridge, probably that he might share the scholastic and other advantages of the place, when he received the call to settle at Narragansett No. 2.

Mr. Marsh started out in his new field of labor under favorable circumstances and with omens of success. He was a young man of excellent heritage, of marked ability, and apparently consecrated to the cause of Christ and the work of the ministerial profession. He had proved himself acceptable to the people of his charge, who had given him a cordial invitation to settle with them, and had given it *unanimously*. For a few years everything, so far as is known, went on harmoniously and happily. Year by year the annual salary was voted, though in some instances not as promptly as desirable, and no signs of discontent appeared on any hand.

But there was trouble brewing, nevertheless. The peace of this little Israel in the wilderness, of which the preacher of the dedication sermon had discoursed, became greatly disturbed. Exactly at what date, or upon what grounds, the dissatisfaction between pastor and people first arose, cannot be ascertained. There is known to have been some delay in the payment of the salary, and other annoying circumstances connected therewith. Moreover, the value of money had depreciated, making the sum received, so far as the practical purposes of life were concerned, less than what was mutually agreed upon in the beginning. Possibly this, a matter of considerable importance to Mr. Marsh, was not duly considered by the proprietors, causing him to feel aggrieved and to conclude that he had counted too much upon their "honor and generosity," as expressed in his letter accepting the call to their service. That these things existed at a later date and produced some friction between the parties and some bitterness of feeling, the records sufficiently prove. Very likely they were secretly operative long before they appeared upon the surface.

But whatever the grievance on the part of Mr. Marsh, there was grievance also on the other side, and grievance, too, the nature of which can be more readily determined. The people were sorely tried by their minister. He was not the man they had taken him to be. His preaching was deemed faulty in point of doctrine by some of them, and his practice unbecoming an ambassador of Christ. And he was called to account for his alleged delinquencies. Mr. Marsh seemed to regard this as an impertinence on the part of the people, and very likely resented it somewhat emphatically, both in word and manner, as such. They, in turn, deemed themselves insulted and abused, and appealed to an ecclesiastical council for redress. This council, composed of ministerial and lay delegates from the churches in Sudbury, Southboro', Marlboro', Sterling, and Oxford, met Oct. 23, 1747. The grounds of opposition to Mr. Marsh may be



understood by presenting the several charges which appear to have been preferred on the occasion for consideration and final judgment. Four copies of these charges are in existence; three of them without signature, apparently prepared by private individuals as expressive of their personal views in the matter, and one which seems to have been made up from the others and duly signed by responsible parties, and which was, without doubt, the one submitted to the ecclesiastical tribunal. It is given in full.

"The Charges alleged against the Rev. Elisha Marsh, to be laid before a Council to be called by the Rev. Mr. Marsh and his Church.

"*First.* For what we look upon as unfaithfulness in the work of the Ministry—

"1. For leaving his people so often and so long at a time without preaching and likewise for neglecting his study and so preaching the same matter over again.

"2. For putting by the service of the Lord's Supper several weeks after it is usually administered.

"3. For saying he had never preached upon the doctrine of Election and that he never would for he did not know anything about it and did not concern his head about it.

"*Second.* For Doctrines delivered in Publick:—

"1. That for a man to vilifie or endeavor to take away another's good name is equally heinous in the sight of God and man as to take a drawn sword and run him through the heart and kill him dead upon the spot.

"2. That he knew of his own certain knowledge that if there was not a speedy Reformation among us, the great blessing of the Gospel would be taken from us.

"3. For delivering that every one under the light of the Gospel might be saved if they would do what they could, and he would assure them that there was Salvation purchased for every one that was present.

"*Third.* For saying when asked what made the difference between those who are under the same means but having a different end, and he said *we* make the difference—for words *yt* are very offensive.

"*Fourth.* 1. For saying in the Church, when Baldwin alleged against him his saying that he would as soon worship the devil as worship a Being requiring more of any man than he is able to perform, [he] did not know [but] he did say some such thing for he did not worship any such Being, for that is the Devil.

"2. For saying to Noah Prat, I'll sware I have a good mind to split your brains out, and swore *yt* if ever he came within his walls again he would split his Brains out.

"*Fifth.* For ill-administration with respect to Baldwin in taking a vote of the Church without giving Publick notice of the same.

"*Sixth.* For Prophanation of the Sabbath in Challenging Joseph Stevens, Jr., to swap powder-horn strings a sabbath-day night after meeting.

"JOSEPH MILLER,  
SETH WALKER,

FAIRBANKS MOOR,  
RICHARD GRAVES,

THOMAS STEARNS,  
PHILIP BEMIS."

These several charges the council considered one by one, and rendered the following decision, copied in full from the original document.

"A Council of five Churches, namely, the Ch<sup>h</sup> in Sudbury, the Ch<sup>h</sup> in Oxford, the Ch<sup>h</sup> in Southburgugh, the Ch<sup>h</sup> in Marlbury, and the Second Ch<sup>h</sup> in Lancaster, meet at Narragansett No. 2 at the Desier of the Ch<sup>h</sup> and agrieved Brethren, to give them our advice und<sup>r</sup> the great uneasiness *yt*





have arose among them on many accounts, after humble Prayer and Supplication to God for direction and hearing what they say before us we come to the following result:—

"1. As to the instances of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. Marshes unfaithfulness Referred to under the first article, considering his own circumstances and the circumstances of this people and other Reasons Given by Mr. Marsh we judge they do not support that charge.

"2. As to those articles that Respect Doktrens that Mr. Marsh has delivered in publick and in privet conversation, this we think he Express himself in an unsuitable and faulty manner, yet upon hearing his explanation and what he has delivered agreeable there to in divers Sermons, we cant Charge him with unsoundness in these Doctrins.

"3. As to the article about Noah Prat it dose not appear to us that the evidence Produced did Support it.

"4. Respecting the administration of Mr. Marsh and the Ch<sup>h</sup> in the case of Baldwin we think they are to be Justified and that he [Baldwin] ought to make an humble acknowledgement to Mr. Marsh and the Ch<sup>h</sup> for his ill conduct in order to the Ch<sup>h</sup>s Receiving him to favor.

"5. As the Last article of Mr. Marsh proposing to swap powder horn Strings with Joseph Stevens Jun<sup>r</sup> on Sabbath evening, we Cant but Blame him for the Same as a very unsuitable motion.

"And now to conclude, we Earnestly Intret the Rev. Mr. Marsh according to the Diricteon Given by the apostle to Titus to Shew himself in all things to be a pattern of Good works in Doctrin, Shewing uncorruptness, Gravity, sincerity, Sound Speech that cannot be Condemned, that he that is of the Contery Sort may be ashamed having no Evil Thing to Say of him.

"And to the Brethren, we Recommend the Direction of the Same apostle to the Romans 'to follow the things that make for Peas and the things wherewith one may edifi another.'

"Finally Brethren fare you well, be pietyful, be of good Comfort, be of one mind Live in peace and the God of love and peace Shall be with you, amen.'

"Datd at Naraganset No. 2

"Oct. 23 1747—

"Israel Loring, Mod<sup>r</sup>, Desents aganst Every article of this result but the last.

"JONATHAN RICE,  
DAVID OSGOOD,  
NATHAN STONE,

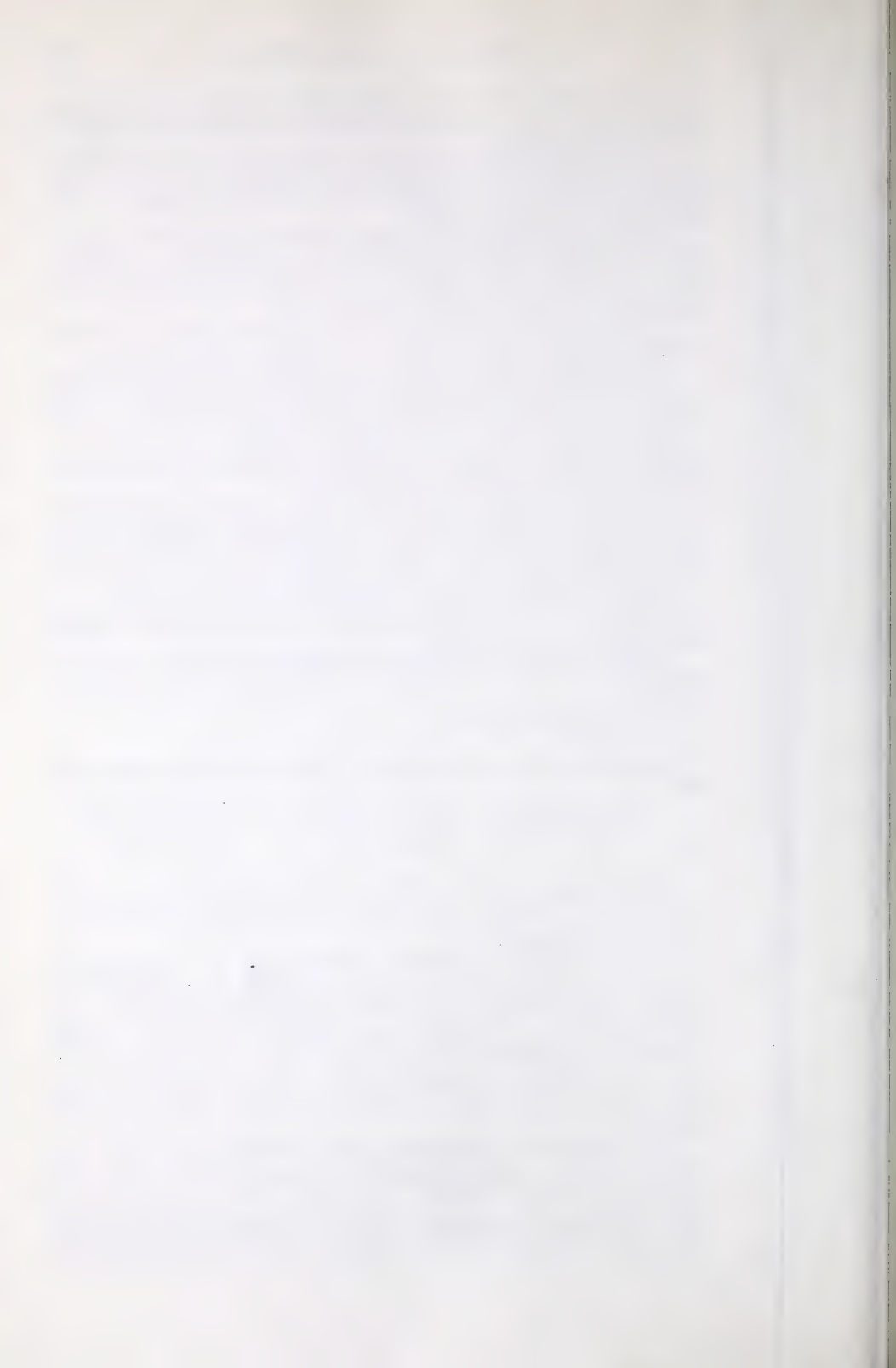
SAMUEL STEVENS,  
DAVID WOODE,  
AARON SMITH,

JONATHAN TOWNE,  
JOHN CAMPBELL,  
JOHN MELLEN."

So it appears that Mr. Marsh prevailed before the council; every charge but one made against him being disallowed and pronounced groundless.

It could hardly have been expected that the complainants would rest satisfied with the verdict and with the involved imputation against their own personal judgment, character, and Christian worth. Nor did they. Such offenses as, in their opinion, had been committed by their minister could not be so summarily disposed of and condoned; such indignities as had been heaped upon some of their heads could not be so easily forgotten.

The leader in the opposition to Mr. Marsh at this time was William Baldwin, whose cause of complaint was not only the one entertained in common with many of his brethren, based upon the alleged malfeasance of the minister in regard to both doctrine and practice, but a personal one also. He felt that he



himself had been wronged, insulted, abused by Mr. Marsh, and on that ground, as well as upon others, he was not disposed to submit to the decision of the council. And he consequently very soon demanded a rehearing of the case before a new council—one truly impartial and disposed to be governed in their conclusions by the principles of justice and equity. It was without avail. Mr. Marsh and his friends were, of course, satisfied, and would not consent to any further action in the matter, while most of his opponents seemed inclined to let it rest, awaiting the progress of events and the workings of Providence. Not so, Mr. Baldwin. He felt himself to have been unjustly treated and dishonored, not only before the church and people of Narragansett, but wherever he was known. But between the determination of Mr. Marsh and those supporting him on the one side, and the practical indifference prevailing on the other, he could do nothing. Smarting under the indignity that had been heaped upon him, and probably prompted by it, he sold out his property in the township and returned to Newton, whence he came. And there nursing his indignation and sense of wounded honor, he sought to enlist the sympathies of the churches of the neighborhood in behalf of himself and his cause, and to secure a second council, whose decisions should exonerate him and relieve the church of Narragansett No. 2 from the reproach that had befallen it through the maladministration, heresy, and misconduct of an unworthy and recreant pastor.

The special personal grievance of Mr. Baldwin was that Mr. Marsh had treated him in a domineering and insolent manner, and had succeeded by unfair means in having him brought into condemnation of the church as a troublesome and mischief-making member. It appears from papers still extant that the question of censuring Mr. Baldwin had been presented to that body on a given Sunday, when there was a fair representation of all interested parties present, and that the accused was fully vindicated and acquitted of all blame, by a majority of those authorized to act, to his own satisfaction and that of his friends; but that afterward, when he was out of town and many of those sympathizing with him were absent from church, Mr. Marsh, without previous public notice, although he had privately informed his own party of what he was to do and so secured a full attendance of his own supporters, brought the matter up again, and not only obtained a reversal of the former vote in Mr. Baldwin's favor, but actually secured his suspension from church membership and from participation in all church privileges and ordinances. At any rate, this was Mr. Baldwin's representation and one of his principal reasons, as he alleges, for demanding a re-adjudication, in ecclesiastical order, of the case.

By a letter missive, over his own signature, dated Newton, Aug. 18, 1748, Mr. Baldwin made an appeal to certain ministers





and churches, the names of which have not been preserved, invoking their aid in bringing the difficulty to a satisfactory settlement. To this letter, no copy of which has come to hand, there seems to have been no immediate response, and Mr. Baldwin, fearing he had not been explicit and positive enough in his declarations, wrote a second one, more definite and full, going over the whole ground of complaint and renewing his request for another council. This letter is preserved, but it is too long for insertion here. While writing on his own responsibility, as he frankly says, Mr. Baldwin claims to have the concurrence of a number of the brethren of the church, "who would also have subscribed the letter but by reason of the distance had not opportunity." He also claims that "at least one half of the Church are aggrieved with the doctrine and conduct of their Rev. Pastor and want relief."

On a separate sheet of paper, also preserved, is a series of charges against Mr. Marsh, methodically expressed and tabulated, apparently prepared for the use of the council, if it should be convened as desired. There has also been found a list of the witnesses to be called to substantiate the several charges specified.

What came of all this can not be determined at this late day. Great pains have been taken to find some reliable information upon the result, but without success, so that all questions relating thereto must be left to conjecture. Whether the council asked for was ever held or not; whether or not Mr. Baldwin ever received satisfaction from Mr. Marsh and was restored to good standing in the church; whether or not the difficulties between the pastor and many of his people were in some good degree adjusted and harmonious relations restored,—these are inquiries that no one can answer. Only this is known, that Mr. Marsh went on for several years after these narrated transactions took place, discharging the duties of his office, receiving his salary, and living in the community in comparative peace and on terms of apparent friendliness and mutual good will. At any rate, there was a cessation of open hostility, an acquiescence in things as they were, an outward calm that passed for content and harmony. But that for the time being, through the years 1747, 1748, and 1749, there was strong, deep, bitter feeling on both sides, there can be no question. The papers quoted and the action referred to, show this beyond all peradventure. Collateral records and memoranda prove how much Mr. Marsh was distrusted as a minister, and how closely he was watched. Certain of his people seemed desirous of finding some cause of offense against him, some ground of accusation, and prepared themselves to maintain and prove charges, should opportunity offer and occasion require. Of this there is ample evidence. Among the documents and loose papers that have come down from the custody of Dea. Joseph Miller, who was



active in church affairs and who preserved with scrupulous care whatever was entrusted to his keeping or deemed important by him, are notes or diary extracts, of which the following, illustrative of the period of history under notice, are samples:

"An account of the Sabbaths that we are without preaching in the Naraganset from Oct. the 21, 1747, which was the time of the Council. Nov. the 1<sup>st</sup> we were without preaching and Nov. the 8 and the 15 & the 22 we were without preaching. Nov. 29, we had two old sermons from 11 of Hebrews 17, 18, 19 verses.

"Oct the 23 [1748] we were without preaching. Oct the 30 we had two old sermons from 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of John the 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter & first verse."

Sharp eyes were on Mr. Marsh about this date, to see not only that he did not shirk his duty, but that he preached sound doctrine, as further extracts prove:

"Psalms 119: 96 verse. 'I have seen an end of all perfection but thy command is exceeding broad.' In his improvement of his sermon upon that subject he told us that obedience is the condition of Life, for without holiness there can be no happiness, on Apr. 16, 1749.

"On the same subject he told that obedience was that on which our eternal welfare turns.

"Upon St. John the 3, — in his discoursing upon it he told us we are not [saved] by the merits of Christ alone.

"July the 18 1753. Mr. Marsh preached from Daniel the 12 Chapter and the 13 verse in which Discourse he told us that these words, which I find in the 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Acts and the latter part of the 48 verse which words are 'And as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed,' which words as they stand in our translation, he said repeatedly were false."

But if Mr. Marsh's doctrine and conduct were not satisfactory to some of his hearers, matters pertaining to his salary were not satisfactory to him. Whether this arose from the failure of the proprietors to pay him the sum agreed upon promptly and in current money, or from the depreciation of monetary values already adverted to, does not appear. At the same time, it should be said in their behalf that on the 22d of June, 1748, in the very midst of the trouble, they not only voted him the stipulated amount of £45 for the sixth year of service, but also "that £26 12s. 6d. be assessed and paid into the Proprietor's treasury for the Rev. Mr. Elisha Marsh, Considering the Depreciating of money in his third, fourth and fifth years' Sallery and Considering the great Rise of the nesseuryes of Life since his Settlement, he giving a Discharge in full for the said three years," and that "thirty Pounds new tenor be assest together with the forty and five pounds new tenor for his Sixth year's Sallery."

But the reverend gentleman did not accept the additional grant on the terms proposed. He felt he had a claim for a larger sum, which had probably been previously presented and which, not being allowed, he sought to have acknowledged by an appeal to the court of the general session of the peace at



Worcester, as the following extract from the records thereof clearly shows:

"Feb. 7 1748-9. A Complaint of Mr. Elisha Marsh, Minister of God's word in a place Called Narraganset No. 2, in the Co. of Worcester, Sheweth, that the Proprietors of sd place contracted with him to settle among them in the work of the Gospel Ministry and to give a yearly salary of 45 pounds current money, and that on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of Oct. 1742, he was accordingly ordained minister of God's word among them and has since been continued in the work of the ministry with them, but that said proprietors have not fulfilled their contract, there now remaining due to him 200 pounds which they refuse to pay, whereby the Petitioner is brought under great difficulty and as per the Petition or Complaint on file appears, praying relief in the premises and that said Proprietors may be compelled to pay him his arrearages according to Contract.

"Read and Ordered that the Complainant, the Rev. Elisha Marsh, serve the Clerk of said Proprietors or Committee with a copy of this Complaint or Petition, as also with the Order of this Court thereon that they shew cause if any they have at the Court of General Sessions of the Peace to be held at Worcester in and for the County of Worcester why the prayer of the Complainant ought not to be answered."

Upon receiving this citation, the standing committee caused a meeting of the proprietors to be held May 4, 1749, at which William Brattle, Edmund Trowbridge, and Daniel Cook were chosen a committee to appear at the Worcester court and make answer to Mr. Marsh's complaint. The committee seemed to prevail in the controversy, as may be reasonably inferred from the court record: "May 9. 1749. Rev. Mr. Marsh's Petition and Complaint *not pros.*"

Nothing more is heard of this matter, and things seemed to go on more quietly and in regular order for some time afterwards, although dissatisfaction still existed and an evident determination on the part of some of the people to have him dismissed from his pastorate. It was not easy to overcome the deep-seated discontent and uncertainty manifested at the last-named meeting, when it was ordered that £88 7s. 6d. be paid to the Rev. Mr. Marsh for his seventh year's salary "*in Case he Continues our Minister.*" On the 26th of October, the same year, £81 15s. were voted him "to make good the deficiencies in former grants" (whether including or in addition to what had previously been allowed does not appear), and £88 for the year ensuing, "at two equal payments, one the 22<sup>d</sup> day of April and the 22<sup>d</sup> day of October next, unless the Bills may be Exchanged for Silver befor that time in which Case one hundred and twenty Eaight ounces of Silver be paid him at two Equal payments on the days aforesaid."

Before the year expired, comparative quiet was restored and it seemed to be understood that the minister was to remain, for it was voted, Sept. 12, 1750, "that Mr. Elisha Marsh have a place in the meeting hous to bulde a pue for him self and his heirs &c."

The next month, Oct. 24th, the proprietors voted "that they will proceed in finishing so fare of the meetinghouse as to build





the cannope over the pulpit and the Communion table and to build ye Stayers and the Gallerys." They also voted "that they Raise six shillings Lawful money on each Right for finishing the meetinghouse and buying a Cushing," and "that Mr. Marsh have £55 for his Ninth years Salary." "Voted on the eleventh article to buy a hansom Cushing."

In the advertisement calling a proprietors' meeting June 19, 1751, the following novel article, illustrating one of the customs of the times, was inserted :

"To know the minds of the proprietors whether they will sell the vacant places in the meetinghouse that are Left for pews at a publick Vandue to the Highest Bidder, and also to chuse a Committee to dispose of the same, they being under obligation not to sell them out of the hands of ye proprietors or inhabitants the purchasers taking them for their seats."

Whereupon it was

"Voted to sell ye pew spots and chose a committee to sell them at a public Vandue to ye highest bidder also that ye Committee be guided by the article in the advertisement in selling the pew spots.

"Voted to put [use] ye money raised by selling the pew spots to finish ye meetinghouse.

"Voted the committee lay out ye pew spots into eighteen divisions."

Dec. 11, 1751.

"Voted to give ye Rev. Mr. Elisha Marsh forty five pounds for his tenth years Sallary."

But Mr. Marsh was not yet satisfied with what he received, and in the summer of 1752 entered a second complaint against the proprietors, at the Worcester court, for not paying him his rightful due. Citation to the clerk was issued as before, a meeting was called, and a committee was chosen to make answer to the court, and, as before, Mr. Marsh lost his case.

On the 28th of March, 1753, the eleventh year's salary was granted, and on November 23d the treasurer credits himself with the payment of £45 "*in full*."

In the notice of a meeting of the proprietors, to be held Nov. 7th, was the article

"To see what addition they will Mak to ye Rev. Mr. Marsh's Eleventh years Sallary, and also grant his twelfth years Sallary with an addition to it that shall be thought Hansom and Credable."

Pursuant to this article

"It was put to vote whether they would Make any addition to Mr. Marshes Eleventh years Sallary and it passed in ye Negative.

"Also voted to give Mr. Marshs twelfth years Sallary also voted Not to Make any addition to Mr Marshes twelfth years Sallary."

"Voted that ye Committee Chosen to finish ye meetinghouse be a Committee to procure a hansom Cushen for ye pulpit."

At a proprietors' meeting held April 23, 1755, it was

"put to vote whether they will grant Rev. Mr. Elisha Marsh thirteenth years Sallarey according to Contract, passed in ye afairmitive.



"put to vote whether they will grant Mr. Marsh eight pounds six and eight pence as an addition this year passed in ye Negative then put to vote whether they would grant him five pounds this year as an addition to his Salarey passed in the Negative."

About this time Mr. Marsh was in trouble of another sort. It appears from the records of the Worcester County court that he had been accused by one of his fellow citizens, Richard Graves, before Peter Atherton, a magistrate of the province, to the effect following, to wit:—"That the said Elisha, having a malicious intent and design, &c. did, on Dec. 12, 1754, and since, make spread publish, utter and declare several lies and false reports to abuse the complainant, tending to his damage and defamation and to the deceiving of others &c in words following." (The specifications are omitted.) The justice had pronounced Mr. Marsh guilty and fined him ten shillings. Mr. Marsh appealed to the higher tribunal, and the jury, after hearing the case returned a verdict of "not guilty," each party paying its own costs in the affair.

"April 7 1756. The fourteenth years' salary of the minister was granted and ten pounds as an addition this present year.

"June 1 1757. *Voted* Mr. Marsh forty five pounds according to Contract for this year, then put to vote to Know their minds whether they would grant an addition to Mr. Marsh's fifteenth years Salary the sum of eight pounds Six Shillings and Eight pence and the vote passed in the affirmative."

But though, so far as the records show, there had been for several years apparent harmony between Mr. Marsh and the people, no open objection being made to his preaching or practice, yet it is evident that the old feeling of dissatisfaction still existed and only awaited the proper occasion for breaking forth anew. Probably the minister was more prudent and cautious in his course, having learned discretion by experience, yet was he deemed heretical and unsafe as a religious teacher and guide. The discontented members of the church, jealous of their cherished faith, seemed to bear with the distrusted pastor with commendable Christian patience and charity, till those qualities ceased to be virtues in their judgment, when they rose in vindication of themselves and of the imperiled doctrines they held so dear. They started a movement again in opposition to Mr. Marsh, which resulted in the calling of another council on the 23d of November, 1757. There are no records of the proceedings of this body to be found, and no notes of the churches represented in it. But it appears from the second book of the proprietors' clerk that it was presided over by the Rev. Ebenezer Gay of Hingham, a man distinguished in his day "for his great learning and as well known for his wit as for his many virtues." He belonged to the Arminian wing of the church, whereby it may be presumed that the council, as a whole, was in sympathy with Mr. Marsh rather





than his opponents. Nevertheless, it felt obliged to regard him as blameworthy upon the points at issue in the controversy and to censure him for his course, as will soon be shown.

Among some old papers brought to the notice of the writer, one has been found, much timeworn and somewhat mutilated, which bears unquestionable evidence of containing the charges preferred against Mr. Marsh at this time, properly tabulated for the use of the council. It is given substantially in its original form, the missing portions being supplied in brackets:

"[To the Rev. Mr.] Marsh, Pastor of ye [Church of Christ in] Narraganset No. 2. Rev. Sir, We [present herewith the things concerning which we feel] great uneasiness with you in yr [ministry of the Gospel among us] viz:—

"[1. In your frequent] preaching against the Doctrine [of original sin] and declaring y<sup>t</sup> the guilt of that sin did not descend to Adam's posterity.

"[2. In what you say about] the translation of some [texts of Scripture] and not allowing them to be [what has usually been believed concerning them].

"3. In your Rigerously Disapling of the Church and in your paying no Regard to the vote of the Church and in [proceeding] in the administration of your office when you Could obtain no vote for the same in the Church particularly in breaking over the vote of the Church passed in Relation to the Baptism of Children; and Resident Members partaking of the Sacraments without a Satificate from the Pastors of those Churches [which] they stand Related unto.

"4. In your Justifieing and pleading for Some passage in the Rev. Mr. Rogers' Sermon Intitled Spiritual [Conversion].

"5. In your Saying that mankind are more naturally inclined to Good than Evil.

"These are some of the articles in which we are agreed and to which we Subscribe.

"JOSEPH HOLDEN,  
ANDREW DARBY,  
DAVID DUNSTER,  
JOHN RAND,  
JOHN BROOKS,  
THOMAS STEARNS,

JOSEPH MILLER,  
PHILIP BEMIS,  
ABNER HOLDEN,  
JOSIAH CUTTING,  
MOSES STEARNS,  
JAMES TAYLOR,

EBENEZER TAYLOR,  
EBENEZER CONANT,  
THOMAS CONANT,  
SETH HERRINGTON,  
JONAS WINSHIP,  
JOSIAH JACKSON."

It is worthy of remark that these names represent many of the most active and substantial people of the township, and possibly a majority of the male members of the church — names that would have influence wherever they were known.

In giving judgment in the case, the council pronounced in favor of the complainants, censuring Mr. Marsh and advising that he have four months allowed him in which either to retract his errors or otherwise make satisfaction. In default of this, it was recommended that, at the expiration of the time designated, the church proceed to dissolve the pastoral relation existing between Mr. Marsh and the people of his charge.

The four months passed away and nothing had been done by Mr. Marsh to reinstate himself in the favor and confidence of his opponents. Whereupon, on the 11th of the next April, the church formally voted to dismiss him from his pastorate, and on the 4th of May the propriety took action approving and con-



firming the same. In the notice of the meeting of that date, the facts in regard to the doings of the council and to the vote of the church were stated and supplemented by an article "to Know the minds of the proprietors of said Township whether they will Concur or Non-concur with said vote, that so the Church and propriety may proceede to an orderly Re-settlement of the Gospel and special ordinances in Said place."

The vote upon this article was taken by written ballot, the record states, and "passed in the afirmative by a Greate majority." It was also voted at this meeting "to grant money to Support the Gospel," and Dea. Joseph Miller, Mr. John Rand, and Mr. Andrew Darby were chosen a committee to provide for the supply of the pulpit. Two months later, July 5th, it was voted "to give Mr. Elisha Marsh £24 7s. 6d. as his Salary from the Twentieth Day of October 1757 to the fourth Day of May Last, on which Day, Mr Marsh was Dismissed from the worke of the Ministry in this place."

This action by the proprietors and by a majority of the church was supposed to be final—not only to cancel all pecuniary obligations to Mr. Marsh, but to terminate all relations with him as a pastor in their midst. Not so, however, Mr. Marsh himself. He maintained that the action of both church and propriety in dismissing him was informal, contrary to the usage of the New England churches, and therefore invalid. He claimed that a council settled him, that only a council could dismiss him, and that, as he was not so dismissed, he was still the rightful minister of Narragansett No. 2, authorized to exercise all the functions of that office, but whether exercising them or not, if prevented from doing so by others, still entitled to his salary.

From the letter given below, it appears that he attempted to continue his ministerial work after the date at which it was voted that said work was to terminate, and that, being remonstrated with, he persisted in his course, impelling the aggrieved to appeal to legal authority for advice in regard to restraining him by a resort to due processes at law. The response to this appeal explains itself:

"*Sir.* I have examined ye vote of ye Council and of the Church and proprietors of Narragansett No. 2, and if Mr Marsh did not comply with ye advise of ye Council I am of opinion That ye Church and proprietors might dismiss him & if their meetings were regularly warned and their Votes for That purpose are Sufficient & if Mr Marsh had notice thereof he ought not to have Attempted to officiate as ye minister of that people against Their will as he did, & for that his misbehavior and to prevent ye like for ye future he may and ought to be bound to his good behavior, but I should think it advisable that ye justice you apply to should send for him before he issued his warrant and if Mr. Marsh will Engage not to attempt ye like for ye future but suffer such person as shall be procured to dispense God's Word to that people to proceed Quietly therein. Then I think it best not to issue any Warrant, but if he refuses to engage to do it, Then That he be bound to his Good behavior.

"Mr. Holden.

Yours,

EDMUND TROWBRIDGE."



Nothing further appears in regard to the feature of the case presented in this letter. It is to be presumed that Mr. Marsh quietly submitted to the inevitable and made no further attempts to officiate as minister of the place. But he did not give up the idea that the action of the church and propriety was out of ecclesiastical order and contrary to the laws of the province, and that he had, therefore, a legal right to his salary and could collect it by due process of law. Waiting till another full year came round, that is, till October, 1758, he then put in a claim for the remainder of his annual stipend, according to the terms of the original contract. This claim not being recognized, he brought an action against the propriety, not only for that sum, but for deficiencies in the payments of previous years, to the aggregate amount of £100 lawful money. Whereupon the proprietors held a meeting, Jan. 17, 1759, and chose Dea. Joseph Miller, Abner Holden, and John Rand a committee to make answer to the suit before the court, and "Impowered them to Employ one or more attorneys as the Cause may require and to Defend Said Cause till final Judgment and Execution."

The committee secured counsel whose name does not appear, but whose "brief" has been preserved, showing that the defense was ably managed. Mr. Marsh, however, gained the case, though the award, instead of being the £100 claimed by him, was only £15 and costs. From this verdict, Mr. Marsh appealed to the superior court.

Meanwhile, the chairman of the committee, Deacon Miller, had written to Mr. John Hunt of Watertown, one of the non-resident proprietors and a man of wide reputation for high character, practical wisdom, and sagacity, for advice in regard to the course to be pursued in the controversy. The reply was very sharp and caustic in its condemnation of the opponents of Mr. Marsh, but is too lengthy for reproduction. Two or three extracts are quoted to show its spirit and style. "I cannot conceive," says Mr. Hunt, "who were your advisers. I Looked upon you as a Man of some Sense, Prudence, as well as Honesty. But as for Father Holden, I had not that opinion of Him. And really wonder the proprietors Have Confided in Him so much. Especially you who were on the Spott and thoroughly knew Him." "I beg of you not to be so headstrong as to Burthen us with such unnecessary Charges as must attend such foolish proceeding."

Previous to the time when the appeal of Mr. Marsh was to come before the higher court, the judges and counsel in the case advised an arbitration of three gentlemen named by the court, to whose discretion and judgment all matters in controversy should be referred for final adjustment. To this proposition the committee gave their consent. But when they reported their doings in this respect to the propriety, at a meeting held Oct. 16, 1759, they were taken severely to task, and directed





not to submit the case to an arbitration "on any terms." Nevertheless, the proprietors afterwards relented, and the dispute was heard and judgment rendered by a board of arbitrators. The award made to the court was that the proprietors should pay Mr. Marsh £60 and costs, amounting in all to £85 15s. 5d. There was some delay in the payment of this award, and Mr. Marsh, becoming impatient, caused an execution to be served upon the proprietors, who canceled it by a vote raising the sum due and ordering it to be paid, Oct. 28, 1761. And so closed the last scene of the serio-farcical drama of the pastorate of Rev. Elisha Marsh in Narragansett No. 2,—all claims on both sides being finally met and adjusted.

Mr. Marsh remained in Westminster till 1770, acting the part of a private citizen and holding some subordinate offices in the service of the public. But things did not go on altogether pleasantly with him. Some of the old roots of bitterness and alienation were undoubtedly left on both sides, and they occasionally manifested themselves openly. His taxes were at one time left unpaid, and the assessors ordered Joshua Bigelow, Constable, "to take into safe custody the body of Elisha Marsh and comit him to the Worcester Co. Jail for default" thereof. He probably escaped the odium of imprisonment by a proper attention to the demands of the collector. Later on, he had trouble with John Rand, afterwards Colonel Rand of Revolutionary times, and entered a complaint before one of the justices of the province "that the said John with force and arms did make a violent assault upon the body of the sd Elisha (he being then in the Peace of our Sovereign Lord &c. and about his lawful business in the Public Meeting House &c.) and him shooked, pushed, and pulled, and uttered Many Menaces and threatening speeches, thereby putting him in great fear and peril &c." Rand plead not guilty, but the magistrate judged otherwise and fined him five shillings and costs. The accused appealed to the Worcester court, where the former proceedings were pronounced informal and he was set free.

In the year named, 1770, Mr. Marsh removed to Walpole, N. H., where, although then 57 years of age, he took up the profession of law, for which he seemed better fitted by nature, mental habits, and predominating temper, than he was for the ministry, and in which he attained considerable success, becoming in a few years judge of the court of common pleas for Cheshire county. The termination of his life occurred as announced in the *Massachusetts Spy* for Aug. 5, 1784: "Died in Lancaster, Elisha Marsh, Esq., of Walpole N. H., occasioned by a fall from a horse a few weeks before at Roxbury." He seems to have so far rallied from the effects of his accident as to get back to the residence of the relatives of his wife, among whom he breathed his last in the 72d year of his age.

Of the family of Mr. Marsh little is known. He married,



according to the "Marsh Genealogy," (1) Widow Deborah Lothrop of Boston, by whom he had Elisha and Sarah and perhaps other children. Elisha had a son, Luther, who settled in Pompey, N. Y., and who also had a son, Luther, now living in New York City. Sarah married Thomas Brigden, Esq., and resided for a time in Westminster, then, in 1773, removed to Charlestown, where her husband soon died without issue. She survived him but a little while. Mr. Marsh married (2) Mrs. Susannah, widow of Samuel Willard of Lancaster who was killed in the French and Indian War, the daughter of Ephraim Wilder, also of Lancaster. By her he had one son, and possibly others, whose grandsons, Benjamin and Charles, were formerly members of the well-known house of Jordan, Marsh & Co., Boston.

It is a difficult task to give an adequate analysis and estimate of the life and character of the first minister of the township, whose history the pages of this volume record. The materials for such a service are scanty and imperfect. So far as is known, he left no memorials of himself, and no contemporary has transmitted to posterity any account of him whatever. Only hasty glimpses of him, seen through the mists and shadows of a century and a half, serve as the data by which the accompanying portraiture is outlined and developed into something like symmetry and completeness.

Mr. Marsh was, beyond question, a man of good natural abilities, disciplined and sharpened by the best scholastic training of his time. A man, too, he must have been, of independent thought, expressing itself in clear-cut, decided opinions, which he did not hesitate to declare and defend whenever he felt the occasion required, though not always, perhaps, in the most discreet, inoffensive, and effectual way. Rather, it would seem, was he inclined, especially if goaded to utterance, to assert his views with not only warmth and zeal, but with such incisiveness and pungency as were calculated, if not designed, to rouse rather than foreclose opposition, and to provoke and increase hostility rather than conciliate and allay it. He had a somewhat inflammable temper and a resolute will, was easily stirred to a sense of personal indignity and wrong, as well as determined and irrepressible in his purpose to carry to the last issue whatever cause or interest he was induced to espouse. Jealous of his rights as a man and a minister, he would allow no interference therewith, but resented every encroachment upon his proper prerogatives with emphatic and unmistakable condemnation, in language, sometimes, it may be, more forcible than polite—more expressive than agreeable to fastidious ears and tastes. He evidently wielded a Damascus blade, sharpening his rebuke with sarcasm, and his condemnation oftentimes with indignant and supercilious scorn. It would not be strange if he now and then overstepped the bounds of proper speech in





this regard, and delivered himself in a way not altogether becoming himself and the office he assumed to fill. He seemed to be more familiar with the denunciations and terrors of the law than with the gentleness and grace of the gospel. And yet there are no evidences of insincerity on his part, or of unfaithfulness to his own convictions of duty and of right. No proofs of duplicity have been brought to light, or of persistent violation of the principles of integrity and honor; and there is no warrant for supposing that he was governed otherwise than by pure motives and worthy aims in life. His general excellence of character and elevation of spirit may be admitted and allowed, as also his deep and fervent piety.

In his theological opinions, Mr. Marsh belonged, as has been intimated already, to the Arminian or liberal wing of the New England church of his time, as contra-distinguished from the more conservative or ultra Calvinistic element within its communion, and might be regarded as a forerunner of the "New Departure" or Andover school party in the Trinitarian Congregational denomination of the present day. And this seemed really to be the head and front of his offending in the controversy between himself and his people. Saving some indiscretions on his part, and some unfortunate personalities growing out of a quick temper and a sharp tongue not always held to a proper control, the offenses with which he was charged were of a doctrinal character; either an open denial or alleged neglect of some of the avowed principles or tenets of the more rigidly Puritanic household of faith, as then interpreted; or delinquencies and faults of speech or conduct growing out of such denial or neglect. On this ground he was brought before the council in 1747, when he was vindicated on every charge made against him, save one; and on the same ground he was finally adjudged in error by the council of 1757, whose verdict was made the occasion of his dismissal a few months afterward from the pastoral office. Yet it would seem, as before suggested, that he was every way better fitted for the bar than for the pulpit, and could prove his native ability and power of usefulness in the world much better by his second choice of a profession than by the first. In that he certainly found a greater amount of that freedom from personal embitterment and strife, a larger measure of that peace and quietude, which become more grateful and are more prized as one descends from the summit of life towards its setting sun. With this brief delineation of the character and standing of the Rev. Elisha Marsh, the first minister of the township of Narragansett No. 2, now Westminster, and this estimate of him as a man and as a religious teacher, we bid him a long and respectful farewell.



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE DISTRICT OF WESTMINSTER.

NEW REGIME INAUGURATED—END OF THE PROPRIETY, ETC.—  
INCORPORATION COMPLETED.

THE Act of Incorporation, erecting the township known for twenty-five years as Narragansett No. 2 into the District of Westminster, clothed with all the rights and privileges of local self-government under the laws of the province and of parliament, but not with the prerogative of representation in the general court, was made effectual by the approval of Governor Pownall, Oct. 20, 1759. Six days afterward the following call was issued for a meeting to organize the new municipality and start it out on its destined career, to wit:

“WORCESTER, SS. To Capt. Danel Hoar of the District of Westminster In the County of Worcester, and one of the Principal Inhabitants of Said District, Greeting—

“Whereas In and by a Law of this Province of the Massachusetts Bay In New England made in Present year of the Kings Reign for Erecting a New Plantation Called Narragansett No. 2 in the County of Worcester into a Seperate District By the Name of Westminster, I the Subscriber one of his majestys Justices of the Pece for said County was Impowered in and By said act to Issue my Warrant Directed to Sume Principle Inhabitant of Said District Requireing him to Notifie and Warn all the Inhabitants of Said District qualified By Law to Vote in town affairs to meet and Choose all Such offisers as Shall Be Nesserey to manage the affairs of Said District.

“These are therefore in his majesty's Name to Require you the Said Danel Hoar to Notifie and Warn the freholders and other Inhabitants of Said District qualified to vote in town affairs to meet at the Publick meeting-house in Said District on the fourteenth Day of November Next at ten of the Clock in the forenoone then and there to Chouse a moderator for said meeting and all Such offissers as Shall be Nesecary to manage the affairs of Said District and Which Towns By Law are obliged to Chuse at their annual meeting In March—Said Warning to be Given fourteene Days Before the meeting.

“Given under my Hand and Seal at Lancaster this twenty-six Day of October anno Domini 1759, and in the thirty third year of his Present majesties King George the Second Reign &c.

“WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

“In obedience to the within Warant I have Warned all the free Holders and others inhabitants to appear at the meting upon Wednesday the 14 Day of November Next to chuse all Such offices as the Law Directs.

“DANIEL HOAR.

“Westminster October y<sup>e</sup> 30: 1759.”



Pursuant to this warrant the legal voters came together and transacted business of which the following is a copy of the record:

"At a meeting of the Inhabitants of the District of Westminster on November ye 19: 1759 Legally assembled at the meeting House for to Chouse town officers as the Law Directs, and then Proceeded and Chose Capt. Daniel Hoar for a moderator to manige Said meeting.

"Voted and Chose Joseph Miller for a Clark for the District til a nother be Chose and Sworn in his Roome Sworn.

"Voted and Chose Joseph Miller, Capt. Daniel Hoar, Andrew Darby, Ens<sup>n</sup> Richard Graves, Left Samuel Whitney for Selectmen.

"Voted that Capt. Daniel Hoar, Joseph Miller and Andrew Darby Be the assessors Sworn.

"Voted and Chose Joseph Holden Jun<sup>r</sup> for Treasurer Sworn.

"Voted and Chose Daniel Walker, John Woodward for Constables Sworn.

"Voted and Chose John Whealor for a Seallor of weights and mesures.

"Voted and Chose William Bemis Thomas Conant Josiah Cutting for tithingmen Sworn.

"Voted and Chose Left Samuel Whitney Nathan Wood Capt. Daniel Hoar William Bemis Thomas Conant for Surveyers of high ways Sworn.

"Voted and Chose Nathan Wood, Elisha Bigelow for fence veuers.

"Voted and Chose Edman Bemis, Ruben Miles for Dearreifts Sworn.

"Voted and Chose David Bemis, John Miles Hogg Reaves.

"Voted and Chose Nathan Wood, John Estabrooks for fielddrivers.

"Voted and Chose Nathan Wood, Benjamin Butterfield for Surveyers of Bords and Shingles.

"Voted and Chose Richard Newton for a Seallor of Leather then the Moderator Desolved the meeting.

"JOSEPH MILLER District Clark."

A second meeting, for the transaction of other business necessary to the efficient working of the new district, was called by the constables upon an order of the selectmen dated Dec. 10, 1759, as attested by the clerk, of the proceedings of which the record is as follows:

"At a meeting of the Inhabitants of the District of Westminster upon ye twenty fourth Day of December 1759 Being Leagally Assembled

"1. made Choice of mr. andru Darby for a Moderator for to Manige Said meeting.

"2ly. Voted that the Annual Meetings be on the first monday in march.

"3ly. Voted that the meetings be warned by Setting up Notifications fourteene Days before the meeting at the Meeting house.

"4ly. Voted that they will Purchis three Books for the use of the District one for a Book of Records and a tresurer's Book and one to Enter Births and Deaths Voted that one Pound four Shillings Be Assessed with the Six Pounds Granted for a Schoole In the same assessment the Claus of Providing a town Stock Passed in the Negitive the Claus for Bulding of a Pound Pased in the affirmtyve upon the Claus of making of Stocks Pased in Negitive And upon the Claus of Provideing of Wiegths and measers the vote Pased in the affirmtyve.

"5ly. Voted that they will Chuse a Commity also voted and chose Deacon Holden Left Nicholas Dike Josiah Cutting for a Commity for to Provide Preaching and gave the Commity the following Directtions that they apply to Mr. Hancock for three Saboth and three to Mr. Jobe Whitney and Mr. Rice for three Saboth Each.





"6y. Voted that they will have a Reading and Riting Schoole for three months in the middel of the town Voted that Six Pounds Be assesed and Leavied on the Inhabitants of the District of Westminster for the use of a Schoole in S<sup>d</sup> District.

"7y. Voted and Chose Abner Holden Nathan Wood be a Comitty for to make Ansyer at the Grate and General Cort to git the Non-residants Lands taxt and then the meeting was Desolved.

"JOSEPH MILLER District Clark."

The district was now duly organized and equipped for service in its own proper field of action and responsibility. The citizens had begun to adjust themselves to the new order of things, and were coming into an understanding of their mutual relations and duties, and preparing themselves for acting agreeably to the laws of the province in the line of the best interests of the community, in both the public and more private walks of life.

Previous to taking up and presenting in their order the various interests and affairs of the district of Westminster, it seems desirable to submit a statement of the general conditions, numerically and otherwise, under which the newly incorporated body started out on its then unknown career. By the considerate care and thoughtfulness of Dea. Joseph Miller, one of the first board of assessors, a copy of the first tax list, dated Dec. 17, 1759, has been preserved, furnishing interesting data for this purpose. It is not necessary to give the names appearing on that list, inasmuch as they are indicated with sufficient clearness by a star (\*) in the catalogue of early settlers to be found at the close of Chapter VI, pp. 92, 93, but only to present some general facts derived from it.

Of the seventy male tax payers there mentioned, who constituted essentially the voting citizens of the district, the largest in their order were Daniel Hoar, Reuben Miles, Eliezer Bigelow, John Miles, Joseph Miller, John Estabrook, Nathan Parker, Richard Graves, Samuel Whitney, Joseph Holden, Jr., Thomas Stearns, John Rand.

The largest owners of real estate, according to the same authority, were Daniel Hoar, Reuben Miles, Nathan Parker, Eliezer Bigelow, Joseph Holden, Jr., Joseph Miller, John Miles, Nathan Whitney, John Estabrook, Samuel Whitney, John Rand, Richard Graves.

Only three persons, Daniel Hoar, Reuben Miles, and Jabez Bigelow, had money on hand liable to taxation, which indicates the meager pecuniary resources of the people of the district at the outset.

According to the same authority there were in the place at the same date: oxen, 53; cows, 170; horses, 52; swine, 35; sheep, 176. Fifteen persons owned two horses each; twenty-one, a pair of oxen; while Joseph Horsley alone had two pair. The number of polls in the district was eighty.



Before proceeding with the narration of events occurring under the jurisdiction of the district of Westminster, it is deemed proper to notice briefly a few topics of considerable importance in themselves, some account of which is necessary to complete the history of the period now in review.

**Last Days of the Propriety.** Although the new regime had been fully established and was in practical working order, yet the old society, known as the propriety, had still important interests at stake in the place, and special business affairs to superintend and direct. Its members retained ownership and control of all the yet undivided lands, besides having outstanding claims and obligations which they were in duty bound to care for, meet, and ultimately extinguish. This condition of things necessitated for a time a double government or system of operations, the old propriety continuing to act simultaneously with the new district, holding meetings and transacting business upon matters belonging to its own proper province, although that province very naturally became more and more limited with the passing years, until it reached the vanishing point and disappeared forever. A few of the more notable acts and events of its declining days will be adverted to, in passing to the course of proceedings pursued under the corporate name of the settlement.

At a meeting of the propriety, held June 30, 1762, the treasurer, Joseph Miller, made a statement of financial affairs covering the time that had transpired since his last report, July 5, 1758, which was accepted. The debts of the body at this date were £16 19s. 2d., and money was granted for the payment of the same.

No officers of the propriety were chosen after the "Act of Incorporation" went into effect, until Nov. 3, 1766, when Andrew Darby was elected clerk, and Andrew Darby, Thomas Conant, and Capt. Daniel Hoar, standing committee. At this meeting it was

*"Voted* to give Rev. Asaph Rice [who had previously been installed minister of the gospel in the place, as will in due time be noted, and who had located on the west side of the old common, near the site of the Abram Wood house, now owned by Reuben P. Merriam] ten rods and half of land of the Meetinghouse plott fronting his house, it being three rods wide Southward and Running Northerly to the line of Mr. Rice's Land to a pint where the fence now stands."

At a meeting held Dec. 30, 1766, it was

*"Voted* that any of the proprietors that have not their Compliment of Land in their third Division according to the Standerd Shall have their Liberty to make up their Compliment of Land on any of the undivided Land they takeing of it in a Regular forme and bringing their Planns for acceptance to the proprietors within one year.

*"Voted,* that all those proprietors that have not had their third Division of upland; who have thrown them up—that they have Liberty to pitch for their Divisions on any of the undivided Land where their third Divisions





originally Laid out are taken up or Broken in upon they to be under the same Restrictions as they ware under when they flung them up; but where their third Divisions Remain Intire, to have no priveliges hereby Notwithstanding."

At this same meeting a proposition from Dr. Zachariah Harvey of Princeton seems to have been laid before the proprietors, in regard to the building of a gristmill in the north part of the town (on the spot where what was known as Brooks' mill afterward stood), if sufficient encouragement could be given him in the way of granting land, etc., accompanied by a plan of third division lot No. 59, which was to be included in the proposed grant; whereupon it was

"*Voted* to Except the plann of Lott No. 59 as Exhibited by Doctor Harvey and Voted that the Clerk Record the Same in the proprietors' Book.

"*Voted* that they would Give Doctor Harvey about forty four acres of Land [in addition to lot No. 59] for the Incouragement of Building a Gristmill, he being under obligation to build the Same in a Suiteable time.

"*Also Voted* that S<sup>d</sup> Harvey have two small peaces of Land more ajoyning to his Land viz.—one of ten acres and Eighty Rods, the other of Eleven acres and Eighty Rods as Disscribed in the plann taken of the Same as a further Incouragement for Building Said Mill."

The mill was accordingly built, facilities for sawing being afterwards added, and did good service for nearly half a century. It was finally destroyed by fire, as was also its successor on the same site. Just a year later, Dec. 30, 1767, after accepting certain plans of lands drawn in accordance with orders passed at previous meetings, the proprietors

"*Voted* to allow any proprietor Liberty to make up their Compliment of Land in the third Division (Except that peace of Common Land Before Landlord Holden's Dore and the Land between Mr. Darby's and Joseph Holden Jr. which Land is hear Excluded) by the first Day of June Next, they to be under the same Restrictions as heartofore, with this further Restriction that they Shall not Goe into the midst of a peace of Commonage but ajojne their pitch to Divided Land and then to take it in Regular forme.

"*Voted* to divide the Commonage or fourth Division of upland and twenty acres to be the Standard and Voted to Lay it out by a Committee and voted that the Committee have power to Quallifie the Land as shall be Judged proper by S<sup>d</sup> Committee, to make all equall as near as they can—Voted that all the undivided Land be Layed out by this Committee with this Restriction that a Roade be Left on the Common [lot] Between Abner Holden's House and the pond ajoyning to Mr. Marshes' Fence of two rods wide."

Mr. John Gates of Stow, surveyor, was appointed to lay out the lots as ordered, with Dea. Joseph Miller and Elisha Bigelow as aids; the work "to be completed by the first day of Dec. next." It was furthermore

"*Voted* that each proprietor Shall Draw his Lot out of the Box and pay three shillings and four pence two farthings Cash att time of Drawing and if Not payed the Delinquent Lot to be Sold for payment thereof att a public vendue agreeable to Law."



The land excluded in the first of the above votes was that lying between the road and the water at the northeasterly extremity of Westminster pond, and the road provided for in the third was the lane, which has always remained open, from the highway to the water at the foot of Meetinghouse Hill, on the easterly side.

At an adjourned meeting, held Jan. 5, 1768, a new board of officers was elected, with ex-Rev. Elisha Marsh, clerk. For some reason now unknown, the former clerk, Abner Holden, declined giving up the books of the propriety to Mr. Marsh, wherefore, upon an appeal from the latter, it was, at a meeting convened April 28th,

*"Voted that if Abner Holden, the former Proprietors' Clerk, will not deliver up the Proprietors Books to Mr. Elisha Marsh, the present Proprietors' Clerk, &c. then Mr. Marsh sue the Books out of his hands to the next Court, if Said Books are not delivered up by the fourth Day of May."*

Whether or not any action was taken, pursuant to this vote, does not appear. If there were, it was of no avail, inasmuch as the books in question seem to have been in Mr. Holden's possession as late as December, 1769. Mr. Marsh left town the following year, when Mr. Holden was chosen his successor, which obviated the necessity of any further consideration of the matter.

Meetings of the proprietors were held from time to time as occasion required, but since the business transacted in them related mostly to the readjustment of third division lots, the raising of money to meet current expenses, and other unimportant matters, they are deemed worthy of little notice in this review.

On the 13th of March, 1770, it was

*"Voted for the consideration of Sixteen Spanish Milled Dollars Paid by Nathaniel Brown of Brookfield, that he have all that piece of Common Land between Mr. Joseph Holden's and Mr Andrew Darby's House Lotts."*

This was a part of the original main street of the township, as laid out by the proprietors' committee. It was four rods wide and extended from the pond southeasterly eighty rods, making two acres area, being the original lot on which the house of F. M. Carpenter is at present located.

A meeting was called for Tuesday, the 22d of May, 1770, of which one of the items of business was

*"To draw the fourth Divisions of upland which are all laid out and ready to Draw."*

When the meeting convened it was first *"Voted that the Clerk Draw for the Ministerial and School Lotts,"* which being done it was *"Voted that the Tickets of the Fourth Divisions be Layed in the Hands of the Clerk and the proprietors to*



Draw their Lotts as soone as they please paying the Cost." As there is no record of any further public action in regard to this drawing, it is to be inferred that it took place quietly at the house of the clerk, at the convenience of those concerned. The lots were located mostly in what is now the town of Gardner, but only a few plans of them in any form have been discovered. They were all drawn, however, in due time, as the clerk's book shows, thus closing out the joint proprietorship of the common lands of the original township. By an act of the general court, passed Nov. 14, 1770, the proprietors were empowered to sell all lands on which taxes were due, for the payment thereof, enabling them to meet and cancel their financial affairs to the uttermost farthing.

The last notification for a meeting of the proprietors was issued March 25, 1777, calling them together on the 23d of April. They assembled in due form and subsequently, at different dates, by proper adjournments, for more than two years, attending to such articles of business as were obligatory upon them or incidental to the final adjustment and termination of their affairs. On the 26th of October, 1778, it was "Voted to Sell one rod of the four Rod Roade leading from the meetinghouse to houselott No. 90 on the Northerly Side of sd Roade or any part of sd Roade," "to be sold on Monday, the 16th day of Nov. next att the house of Landlord Everett in Westminster att one of the clock in the afternoone," and the committee on selling other lands, already chosen, were charged with the duty of carrying this vote into effect. This action pertained to the main street of the town, and the committee attended to the duty assigned them, deeming it wise, however, to retain at its original width that portion of the thoroughfare extending through what afterward became the principal part of the central village.

A few adjourned meetings took place after the last named date, at which very little and sometimes no business was transacted. The final adjournment was to the last Monday in August, 1779. But no meeting, so far as the clerk's book shows, was held at that time, and so the propriety of "Narragansett No. 2 at the Wetchusett" came to a peaceful end. Its work was done; its mission fulfilled. But in its place was the "Town of Westminster," fully organized and equipped for service and in the "full tide of successful experiment." So that while we "speed the parting" we also "hail the coming guest."

**Sequel to the Ministry of Rev. Mr. Marsh.** It will be remembered that in the controversy arising between Mr. Marsh and the propriety in regard to the amount of money to be paid him after he was informally deposed from his office, certain terms of settlement were determined by a board of arbitration appointed by the superior court with the consent of both parties, and that in order to secure the payment of the





sum awarded him, Mr. Marsh had deemed it necessary to open another suit against his opponents, which resulted in the attachment of certain property belonging to them. To discharge the obligation, the proprietors at a meeting, Oct. 28, 1761, voted to raise the requisite amount of money. This vote they undertook to carry into effect by laying an assessment upon the original house lots of the township, to be collected in the usual way, a refusal to pay in any instance being followed by sale of lands, as by law duly provided. The non-resident proprietors protested against this course and made an appeal to the general court for a stay of proceedings, on the ground, as stated in the records of that body for June 5, 1762, "that they had been at great expense in bringing forward the settlement of said place and that not long since on a Petition of a number of Inhabitants to the General Court there was a tax of one half penny an acre laid upon the Lands of the Non Residents for four years and it was then agreed that they should then be exempt from any further burdens—notwithstanding which a Proprietors meeting was called and the Residents being a Majority or near it they Laid a Tax of nine shillings or thereabouts on each Right which the Petrs apprehending to be contrary to the agreement made before the General Court's committee declined paying and their Lands are put upon sale for the payment of said Tax and Praying Relief."

Upon this petition it was ordered that the resident proprietors be cited to appear and show cause why it should not be granted. The matter was considered at a meeting of the district, Dec. 30, 1762, and Nathan Wood and Abner Holden were chosen to act in response thereto. A hearing before the court took place in due time, when the case was referred to a committee, of which the afterward celebrated James Otis was chairman. The committee reported in favor of the petitioners, Jan. 29, 1763, whereupon the court ordered "That the tax be set aside as unreasonable and that all proceedings in levying the tax be wholly stayed."

While this was going on, Mr. Marsh seemed determined to have the property attached by him for the payment of his claim sold. The committee of the proprietors, Dea. Joseph Miller, Abner Holden, and John Rand, who had managed the case against Mr. Marsh, voluntarily came forward and, to prevent this, paid Mr. Marsh the amount awarded him, and so stopped all proceedings in that direction.

After a time, the question of reimbursing the committee the amount they had advanced to satisfy judgment in Mr. Marsh's favor, came up for consideration. The proprietors seemed to rest easy as the matter stood, and the people of the district were at least indifferent in regard to it. There is no record of any action upon it by either of these parties for two years, although there is collateral evidence that both were applied to



for an adjustment of the claim, yet without practical avail. Unable to obtain satisfaction from either the propriety or the district, the committee laid their case before the provincial legislature, asking aid in securing their rightful due. At first, that body dismissed the matter, but afterwards referred it to a committee of which Benjamin Lincoln was chairman, who reported adversely, and all further proceedings for the time being were stayed.

After a few months a second petition of a similar import was presented to the same body, which came up for consideration at the January session, 1765. The petition, after rehearsing in detail the controversy with Rev. Mr. Marsh, up to the date of the order of the general court canceling the tax that had been levied for the payment of the award in his favor, closes as follows: "the Execution is not satisfied, then the Officer turns upon the Committee for the Remainder and we have been obliged to Discharge the same or must have submitted to the Sale; we Have applied to the town, they wont Ease us, to the propriety, no mercy from them. To this Hon. Court we now most humbly apply and plead that it can't be just that we should Care [carry] the Charge of the whole or any more than our proportion. We know of no agreement that Ever was made by any Committee that the proprietors should be freed from paying their own Just Debts and are Sure that no Committee had a Legall Right to Doe it."

It is not in evidence that the general court granted any relief to the petitioners. Very likely the matter was regarded as belonging to the judicial rather than the legislative department of the government; or, possibly, the action of the district soon after may have induced the committee not to urge their plea further before the legislature.

In the warrant for a district meeting, March 4, 1765, was an article

"To know the minds of the District whether they will prefer the petition that was Entered in the General Court by Joseph Miller on January y<sup>e</sup> 22, 1765, in order that the Committee may be Released; or to come into any other method that the affaire may be settled in the most Just and Acquitable manner."

In the proper order of the proceedings of the meeting,

"After debate the vote was put whether they would Act on this Article and the vote passed in the affirmative and then Voted to appropriate the Half penny tax to Defray the Charge of the Lawsuite as far as it will Goe and to Defray the Remainder by a Grant out of the District upon poles and Estates."

But this action was not satisfactory to certain of the inhabitants who expressed their dissent as follows:





"We the Subscribers Enter our protest against the votes passed by the District upon the Eighth Article in the Warrant for this Annual March Meeting Because they have there by taken upon them to pay a Debt which the District Never Contracted and Do not owe Conterary to Law and Common Sense.

"ELISHA MARSH,  
RICHARD BAKER,  
JOSIAH KENDALL,  
RICHARD GRAVES,

JOHN MILES,  
STEPHEN SAWIN,  
STEPHEN HOLDEN,  
JOHN WOODWERD."

REUBEN MILES,  
JOSEPH HOSLEY,  
NOAH MILES,

This protest is based upon the fact that the committee, in whose interest the action was taken, were the servants of the *propriety* and not of the district, and should therefore look to the proprietors for re-imbusement of moneys expended in the discharge of duties entrusted to them. At a subsequent meeting, the opposition endeavored to obtain a reconsideration of the votes in question, but did not succeed. Baffled at home, they turned, as seemed to be much the habit in those days, to the provincial authorities for a revocation of the action of the majority of the voters of the district. Their petition was presented Feb. 17, 1766. The usual order of citation was passed, and on May 26th following, Abner Holden and Joseph Miller were chosen "to make answer to the petition," which they did in a remonstrance reviewing once more the whole case from the beginning, and closing with a strong appeal in behalf of the district. The document is too long for insertion here.

About the same time an address upon the matter in controversy to the recusant petitioners was prepared, probably by Dea. Joseph Miller, in whose handwriting it has come down to the present time. It is spicy reading, and well worth the space it may occupy in this work.

"To the Inhab<sup>ts</sup> of the District of Westminster that have petitioned the General Court against the Proprietors Committee. Gentlemen.

"You have now had the full Representation of the formidable and awful Complaint Entered in the General Court against us the Committee for undertaking and carrying on the Lawsute against Mr. Marsh. How far it will Bare the force of Examination when wayed in the Ballance of Truth, I leave to every unprejudiced Candid mind to Determine, Nay after Examining facts in Relation thereto I leave my verry Enemys themselves to Judge. Sirs, if only an Enemy had done thus we could Cheerfully have Borne it, but it is thou o my friend that has Stirred up the adversary—as if the Loss of time and all our Cost was not enough. But must bare such Calumny as I would not Dare Cast upon an aboriginal Native,—however through Shortightedness we may have done those things that hant pleased you, yet Designingly we have Done nothing against y<sup>e</sup> Interest we undertook for but with faithfulness prosecuted every method within y<sup>e</sup> Limits of our Power Conducive to your Real Service and have Spared no Cost nor pains to ease you of the Burthen of paying us, Much time have we lost that we ask no Reward for & Likewise each of us have paid more Cash (besides all our loss of time) than will cost either of you if you pay us our demands, if I mistake not greater Ingratitude cant be Discovered than appears in some of you Gentlemen—pray Consider how urgent how Zealous Some of you ware with us to proceade in this Service."



This case speaks for itself. Evidently, human nature was much the same a hundred and twenty-five years ago as now. It is no uncommon thing at any time for servants of the public to fail of being appreciated, or of receiving just compensation from those in whose behalf they have acted—at whose most urgent demand, perhaps, they have discharged important public trusts or gained public benefits of great value.

No record of the result of the petition and remonstrance described above has anywhere been found. It seems probable, however, from what subsequently transpired, that the petitioners prevailed, and that the district was restrained from carrying into effect the votes against which protest had been made, probably on the ground before hinted at, that the district, legally considered, had no responsibility and no jurisdiction in the matter, but that it belonged to the propriety, and to the propriety alone, to adjudicate and bring it to a final settlement. This is to be inferred from the fact that the proprietors at last took the whole subject in hand and carried it through to a successful and permanent issue.

Before doing so, another step was taken by the committee, which probably determined the ultimate action in the case and hastened the final consummation. Failing, as it is presumed they did, in obtaining the encouragement and support of the general court in their previous line of effort, they laid their case before the court of common pleas at Worcester, at its May session, 1767, where they obtained judgment in their favor against the propriety, upon which, according to the decision rendered, they had a legal, if not a rightful, claim.

In compliance with this action of the judicial tribunal of the county, the proprietors, in closing up to the 30th of December, 1767, their outstanding liabilities, included the award of the court in the committee's favor among them, and at a meeting held by adjournment, Jan. 7, 1768, made due and adequate provision for its liquidation, which was satisfactorily consummated not long afterward. Thus it was that, after a delay of five years, during which there had been a great deal of hard but ineffectual labor expended, with much time and money on the part of all concerned, and not a little irritation and hard feeling engendered, Messrs. Miller, Holden, and Rand obtained their evidently just and rightful due—what, it seems at this day with the facts at hand, ought, upon all principles of honesty and honor, to have been cheerfully and gratefully paid at the outset without question and without hesitancy in any behalf. And thus, too, it was that the financial troubles growing out of the relations of the people of Narragansett No. 2 with the first minister of the Gospel in the place, came to a perpetual end. It is not the province of this history to distribute merit and blame in this or in any other case, but simply to state the facts with scrupulous regard to the truth of things, so far as it can



be ascertained, leaving the reader to draw his own inferences and to form his own conclusions in matters involving moral considerations and personal deserts, referring all at last to Him whose eye is in every place beholding the evil and the good, whose wisdom is unerring, whose judgment is impartial, and whose ways are holy and righteous forevermore.

**Non-Resident Proprietors' Taxes.** Before taking up the thread of transpiring events and business transactions in the district of Westminster, it is proper to refer to yet another matter, thus far unexplained, closely related to, and forming a part of, the history of the period under notice. In the petition for an act of incorporation there was a clause praying "that the non-resident Proprietors be required to bear equal tax with us for seven years for the Support of the Gospel and the laying out and Clearing away new roads," which was referred to a committee in the customary form for consideration and recommendation.

On the 2d of February following, 1760, the committee reported and the court proceeded to act in accordance with its advisory provisions, as shown in the record of its action in the premises, to wit:

"In Council Feb. 2, 1760. Read and Accepted and Ordered that there be a Tax of one half penny per acre laid on the Lands of the non-resident Proprietors of the District of Westminster as also upon a Tract of 500 acres laid out to the late Gov. Belcher included in the bounds of said District — the money so raised to be applied towards defraying Ministerial Charges in Said District, and that the Inhabitants be authorized and empowered to appoint Assessors and Collectors of said Tax who are hereby vested with the like Power with other Assessors and Collectors and are to govern themselves according to law in the discharge of the duties of said Office.

"Sent down for concurrence

A. OLIVER, Sec.

"In the House of Representatives, Feb. 8, 1765.

"Read and Concurred.

S. WHITE, Speaker.

"Consented to

T. POWNAL, Govr."

By an oversight, the time for which the half-penny tax was to be levied was not stated in the above order, and a supplementary vote was passed, limiting it to four years, as the committee had recommended.

Notwithstanding the very plainly stated provisions of the above order, the resident proprietors undertook, at different dates, to levy extra taxes upon non-residents and collect the same, an instance of which, noted a few pages back, occurred in connection with the troubles incident to the final settlement of the claims of Rev. Elisha Marsh. Others took place subsequently, and with the same result as then ensued, — the latter, protesting against the assessment and carrying their case up to the general court, securing there a release from it. Upon what grounds these residents expected their outside associates to continue to bear with them the financial burdens of the propriety, it is impossible to see, except that they conceived the





court's order to apply only to matters pertaining to the jurisdiction of the district, and not to affairs of the old propriety. If that were so, they differed with the legislature, which evidently deemed its action in the premises final and complete, exempting the non-resident proprietors from *all* claims and exactions in the township, save those specifically named in its enactments. In that interpretation all parties concerned were obliged ultimately to acquiesce.

**Affairs of the District.** In returning now to the narration of current events, it is proper to remark that only the more general ones will be noted in this connection, those of a special character being reserved for a classified, topical presentation under their respective heads in subsequent chapters.

Aside from transactions pertaining to these reserved subjects, nothing of importance was done at the annual meeting in 1760 except to elect the required district officers for the year, the principal of which, with those chosen from year to year afterward, will be given in tabulated form in due place and time.

On the 8th of July, the selectmen, in obedience to the statutes of the province, presented a list of names of persons who should be liable to be drawn as jurors to serve in the courts of the county of Worcester. The list was accepted and approved by the voters in district meeting assembled, and, as it was the first in the long series which has been continued to the present day, is given in full, as it stands in the clerk's book of records:

"Capt. Daniel Hoar,	Nathan Whitney,	Josiah Cutting,
Andrew Darby,	Daniel Walker,	Jonas Winship,
Ens <sup>n</sup> . Richard Graves,	Jonas Whitney,	Joseph Holden, Junr.
Left. Samuel Whitney,	Richard Baker,	Abner Holden,
Joseph Miller,	Reuben Miles,	Stephen Holden,
Thomas Conant,	John Miles,	Elisha Bigelow,
Nathan Wood,	Noah Miles,	John Woodward,
William Edggle,	Philip Bemis,	John Brooks,
Seth Herrington,	Left. Thomas Stearns,	William Bemis,
Left. Nicholas Dike,	Benjamin Butterfield,	John Estabrooks.
James Walker,	John Rand,"	

At a district meeting held September 21st, special assessors and collectors were chosen to levy and receive the tax of one-half penny per acre on the lands of non-resident proprietors. A "Pound" was also ordered to be built "on the corner of the meetinghouse lot near to Dea. Holden's land," but the location six months later was changed to "the crotch of the roads against Joseph Holden Jr's fence."

At the same meeting it was voted to build "Stocks" for the punishment of misdemeanors and light offenses against the peace and good order of society, but no committee was chosen to carry the vote into effect and no record is found relating to their construction at that early date. They had a place in the community, however, some years afterward.



Some doubt having arisen in regard to the legality of the previously pursued method of calling the meetings of the district, and consequently of the transactions of those meetings, a petition was sent to the general court, at its session in January, 1761, asking that the proceedings thus far carried on be ratified and confirmed by legislative authority. The petition was favorably received and the request it contained was granted, by an order which passed both houses and was signed by the governor, Francis Bernard, on the 22d of that month. Up to that date the warrants had been issued by a simple order of the selectmen. They were afterward issued upon a similar order given "In His Majesty's name."

Sept. 9, 1762. At this date the district gave its first vote on the election of "some meet person to be Register of Deeds and Conveyances in and for the County of Worcester in the room of Hon. John Chandler, Esqr. late Register, deceased." The vote was unanimous for Timothy Paine, Esq.

As early as 1763, the question of the division of Worcester County began to be agitated in the general community, and the voters of the district were called upon for an expression of feeling in the matter, which they gave in a meeting held July 26th, when

"It was put to vote to see if they will agree to be set off Into a separate County with ye westerly part of ye County of Worcester and easterly part of the County of Hampshire and It passed In the Negative."

Oct. 19, 1763. The district voted "to grant six pounds to procure a town Stock [of powder, balls, etc.] and waits and Measures," and Captain Hoar was charged with the duty involved thereby. Mr. Nathan Whitney was appointed to the office of "Surveyor of Wheat and flour."

At a meeting held April 30, 1764, a former vote requiring all accounts against the district to be presented to and approved by the whole body of voters was rescinded, and "voted that the Selectmen be a Committee to allow and settle accountps."

At the annual meeting in 1765, adjourned to March 18th, it was "Voted to fence the Burieing place," and different persons were designated to do the work under definitely specified conditions. The construction of suitable gates was included in the above transaction. Also "voted and chose Mr. Philip Bemis a Grave Digger for the future."

Immediately before the election of wardens, who were a kind of police force in the community, at the annual meeting, March 3, 1766, the law respecting the proper observance of the Sabbath was read for the information of heads of families, touching the duties of themselves and their households in regard thereto.

In the warrant for the annual meeting of March 7, 1768, the following article appeared:





"To see whether the Destrict will comply with the measures proposed by the Town of Boston with Respect to Industry and manufactory and to prevent the purchase of Superfluities."

Pursuant to this article the following manifesto was prepared and adopted. It is given as it stands in the original draft, prepared, undoubtedly, by Abner Holden, and preserved in the records of the clerk:

"The Destrict of Westminster taking into Consideration the Sinking State of the province arising through the manifold Extravagencies of the Inhabitants; in the Greate Neglect of Industrey; and the Still Greater Increase of our misery, in the Extravigent Expence of its Inhabitants, in the purchase of Superfluities and are fully Senceable of the absolute Nessesity of Industrey and frugallity in order to Save us from a Seane of Impending woe; and to increase our Welth and place us in a State of Independancy—Do Cherfully and unanimously Vote and Resolve that from and after the first Day of April Next, we will not purchase any Superfluities—and that we will take Every proper method within our power to Increase Industrey and manufactory within the Destrict for we are fully Senceable that Idleness has a Natural Tendency to Impoverish any Community and when attended with Extravigency Brings Emeadiet Ruine, will therefore by all possable and Lawfull meanes take every method within our power to Incourage Industrey amongst ourselves—and take this opertunity to give it in Direction to our Selectmen to take Speciall Care that all Idle persons amongst us be kept to Some Lawfull Buisness—and that the Law of the province in that Regard be Duely Observed.

"The above Vote passed Unanimously."

It is very likely that this pronunciamento against idleness, luxury, and prodigal expenditure, made at the suggestion of the authorities of the town of Boston, had a patriotic purpose in it, and was really designed by its originators, not only to promote self-reliant and independent habits among the people at large, but to prevent the paying of moneys to the mother country for unnecessary and costly goods of whatever kind, to her advantage and to the harm of the colonies, and so, by both means, forecasting, in a measure, the future, and preparing for a possible contingency that might arise in days not far ahead. At any rate, in view of what soon afterward transpired, it proved to be a wise precaution as a matter of public policy, as well as a wholesome admonition regarding some of the salutary interests of personal and social life.

As the needs of the community became more apparent and imperative, and the means of supplying them more abundant, the appropriations of the district reflected the changed condition of things in these regards. This is shown in the fact that on the 12th of June, 1769, the district "voted to purchase a Burreing Cloath and a Chrisening Bason and chose Mr. Brigden to purchase them."

Up to this date the inhabitants of Westminster had enjoyed only restricted municipal rights and privileges, having no legal claim to representation in the provincial legislature, and no voice in framing the laws or shaping the policy under which they lived



and by which they were governed. Early in 1770, a movement was started with a view of having all restrictions in these respects removed, so that the corporation might take its desired place as a co-equal municipality with other towns in the Commonwealth. A petition was consequently prepared and sent to the general court, representing that view and asking action in accordance therewith. This resulted in the passage of

#### "AN ACT

"TO ERECT THE DISTRICT OF WESTMINSTER IN THE COUNTY OF WORCESTER INTO A TOWN BY THE NAME OF WESTMINSTER.

"WHEREAS, the inhabitants of the District of Westminster have petitioned this Court to be incorporated into a town that they may enjoy the privileges of other towns in being represented in the Great and General Court,—

"Be it therefore enacted by the Lieut. Governor, Council, and House of Representatives, That the District of Westminster in the County of Worcester be and hereby is incorporated into a Town by the name of Westminster, and that the Inhabitants thereof be and hereby are invested with all the Powers, Privileges, and Immunities, which the Inhabitants of the several towns within the Province do enjoy.

"Passed by the House of Representatives Apr. 19, 1770; in the Council, Apr. 24, 1770; and signed by the Lieutenant Governor, THOMAS HUTCHINSON, Apr. 26, 1770."

Thus ends the history of the district of Westminster. During its ten and a half years' continuance, its growth in population, in wealth, in social and political importance,—in all that goes to make a prosperous, homogeneous, well-conditioned, and happy community,—was marked and auspicious, full of encouragement and promise. More than a hundred new families came in during that decade, the more permanent and substantial of which are represented by the following names: Adams, Bailey, Barnard, Bickford, Brown, Carter, Clark, Cook, Cooper, Damon, Eaton, Emerson, Everett, Flint, Gager, Garfield, Gates, Haines, Hall, Harris, Harvey, Holt, Houghton, Howard, Keyes, Kezar, Laws, Leonard, Lewis, Martin, Nichols, Pratt, Ray, Raymond, Ross, Sawin, Sawyer, Spalding, Taft, Temple, Thurston, Totttingham, Townsend, Tucker, Walton, Wetherbee, Whitman, Williams, Wilson, Wright.

The appended table, based upon authentic data, except as indicated, shows the increase of the township during the ten years following its incorporation in the particulars specified:

Items.	1759.	1764.	1769.	Items.	1759.	1764.	1769.
Population . .	312(?)	468	660(?)	Horses . .	52	56	69
Polls . . . .	80	120	169	Swine . . .	35	95	147
Oxen . . . .	53	97	161	Sheep . . .	176	403	703
Cows . . . .	170	259	348				



## CHAPTER X.

### PERIOD OF THE REVOLUTION.

ITS CAUSES—INAUGURATION AND ADVANCE—TOWN ACTION—  
LIST OF WESTMINSTER SOLDIERS.

WE come now to a consideration of the part taken by the town of Westminster in that great struggle between England and her trans-Atlantic colonies, which resulted in the severance of the bonds uniting the two under one supreme sovereignty, and the founding of a new nationality on these American shores. The causes leading to the war of the Revolution properly belong to a work on general history, rather than to one like that now in hand, and to some such work the reader is referred for an elaborate and exhaustive statement of the facts in the case. Nevertheless, it is deemed fitting to glance at the steps which led up to the mighty conflict of arms that had so much to do with changing the fortunes of a continent, and turning life within its borders into new and untried channels of activity and development. To do so intelligently, it will be necessary not only to go back a little in the order of time, but to take note of the pre-existing relations between the parent government and its dependent provinces.

The circumstances under which the first English immigrants sought a home in the New World have been sufficiently set forth in preceding pages. There is no reason to suppose that after the excitement and disturbed feeling incident to leaving their native land had passed away, any deep-seated and irreconcilable hostility between the people of the old country and those of the new remained. The ties of personal and family relationship, social affiliations, sacred and tender memories, a common ancestry and heritage, forbid such a conjecture. To be sure, many of the colonists, especially those of New England, had been harshly treated by the ruling powers of Britain, and were compelled to flee to these wilderness retreats in order to live in the enjoyment of those rights which they believed belonged to them and to all men by nature and divine decree, but they were by no means disposed to cherish perpetual animosities in their breasts on that account, or the spirit of vengeful hate. The religion in which they believed and for which they had suffered so much forbade all that, and they were disposed to yield to its behests in that regard. Besides, time had wrought great changes in the motherland during the century





following the forced flight of the Pilgrim and Puritan from her shores. The Stuart dynasty, synonym of bigotry, intolerance, and cruelty, had gone and a milder rule had been inaugurated. Intercommunication between the old world and the new became more frequent and more cordial with the passing years. The bonds of kinship, of a common Protestant faith, and of a common history, exerted a powerful influence in modifying the feeling and giving cast and character to the relations between those of the same language and nationality dwelling on the two sides of the Atlantic. Whatever of the old superstition and tyranny remained in England, was found, not among the people at large, but among the ruling classes represented by the king and parliament, who very naturally were jealous of their hereditary privileges and resolute in their determination to preserve them as they had come down from the venerated past. To them was given, they felt, the right to manage English affairs throughout all the provinces of the realm, in their own way, and to compel acquiescence therein by force and arms, if necessary. Hence, the American Revolution.

The colonies had never renounced allegiance to the English crown. They admitted the right of the sovereign to exercise authority over them, only that authority must be beneficent and kind—consistent with their own native-born prerogatives, and used in the promotion of human liberty, not in circumventing or destroying it. Very likely the parent government never was inclined to allow all that was claimed in this behalf, but left the matter in abeyance, only awaiting quietly the time when circumstances should justify an open stand against it. So long as the colonies were weak and poor, struggling to get a foothold in the New World, scarcely able to support themselves and their growing population, no king or ministry had been inclined to call upon them in any way to aid in maintaining the English sovereignty, or in contributing to the English treasury. But things had gradually changed here as well as there, and changed for the better. The settlements, especially those of New England, had greatly prospered—had increased in wealth, in the means of self-subsistence, as well as in population. Lands were becoming more and more productive and valuable. Commerce had grown to be an important interest. Many kinds of manufacture had been established and were “in the full tide of successful experiment.” It was but natural that the monarch and his satellites, continually needing resources to carry forward ambitious plans and costly wars, should turn to these thriving dependencies across the sea and say, “These, too, are our subjects, and why should not they, now that they are able, help support the machinery of government, maintain its policy, prosecute its undertakings, and pay its bills.” And all the more would they be inclined to take this view, after having expended large sums of money for the benefit of the colonies themselves, as was the



case in the two wars that had been waged against the French and Indians, as heretofore narrated.

And herein is indicated the immediate cause, or the occasion, at least, of the rupture which culminated in the Revolution. At the close of the conflict terminating in 1763, the parent government found itself struggling beneath the burden of a mighty debt—a debt incurred, for the most part, by expenditures on American soil, in the interest and behalf of its American subjects, and therefore should be met and paid in due proportion by those subjects. It was a matter of simple justice, it was argued, that such should be the case. On this ground, the crown and ministry based their claims, urged their plea, made their demand. There was not a little plausibility and show of reason in this view, it must be confessed, and it might have been accepted and allowed, but for collateral considerations vitiating its force. Chiefest of these was the fact that the demand was purely *ex parte* and arbitrary. No disposition was shown to deal with the colonies on terms of equity and honor. They were allowed no rights whatever in adjudicating and determining the case, no voice in the public counsels by which it was finally settled. And here was where the break came. Out of this condition of things sprung the expressive apothegm of the devoted lovers of liberty: "Taxation without representation is tyranny." They said "If we are to help support the government, we must have part in the government." "If we are to help pay the bills, we must be consulted in regard to making the bills." This demand the crown and ministry would not grant. And not granting it, began at once to devise ways and means for wresting surreptitiously from the colonies what could not be obtained by their free and full consent. A system of legislation was determined upon for the distinct purpose of replenishing the resources of the national treasury, at the expense of the American subjects. The new king, George III, "an obstinate young man," seemed to be fully in sympathy with the contemplated policy of the government. One of the first things done under that policy was the sending of several regiments of His Majesty's troops across the water, ostensibly for the purpose of protecting the people from further attacks by the recently conquered enemy, from whom, in fact, there was nothing to fear, but virtually to enforce whatever arbitrary enactments might be made against the rights and liberties of the people.

And such enactments followed in due time. Some restrictive laws had been passed previous to the close of the "French and Indian War," but in a comparatively mild and inoffensive form, provoking no hostile demonstrations and little opposition. The first act of parliament revealing its design of enforcing a system of taxation upon the unwilling colonies was passed Sept. 29, 1764. It awakened much indignation on this side the water,—an indignation greatly intensified the next year by the passage





of the infamous "Stamp Act," against which the well-known, inflammatory speech of Patrick Henry was delivered in the Assembly of Virginia. In the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, James Otis rose to the height of the occasion in a masterly address proposing the union of all the colonies in opposition to the enforcement of the offensive statute, which address culminated in the famous Continental Congress of the next decade. Violent hostility to the measure was manifested in various parts of the country. The stamp distributor in Boston, Andrew Oliver, was hung in effigy. A building supposed to be his office was torn to pieces. The house of his brother-in-law, Chief Justice Thomas Hutchinson, afterwards governor, a strong supporter of kingly prerogative, was ransacked and stripped of its contents, while he and his family, hurrying out of town, barely escaped with their lives. "The unconquerable rage of the people" compelled the abandonment of all attempts to execute the odious act. The opposition throughout the country assumed such proportions that a strong party was created in parliament fully sympathizing therewith, which, under the leadership of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, secured the repeal of the measure in 1766, to the great relief and joy of the colonies and their English friends.

But the crown and ministry were not to be thwarted in their attempt to wrest money from their American subjects. A law was enacted laying heavy imposts upon many kinds of imported articles in common use,—sugar, coffee, glass, paper, colors, tea, etc. This roused renewed hostility and indignation. The Boston patriots, including women as well as men, said "We will eat nothing, drink nothing, wear nothing coming from England." British manufactures were, to a great extent, renounced, and domestic manufactures were encouraged. It was resolved to give up the use of mutton, in order that American flocks might be multiplied, and the production of woolen goods at home promoted. No costly display was to be made at funerals, and no new clothing from foreign goods was to be produced any further than absolute necessity required. Towns outside of Boston were asked to come into a similar arrangement. It was in response to this request that the citizens of Westminster passed the vote of March 7, 1768, quoted on page 140. In view of the existing excitement, Governor Bernard gave to the home authorities an exaggerated account of the condition of affairs, and a false representation of the spirit and purpose of the patriotic citizens, and called for more troops to prevent outbreak and compel submission, which were accordingly sent him. The Provincial Legislature of Massachusetts had passed resolutions discouraging the use of imported goods, which it was ordered by parliament to rescind. Refusing to do this, the governor dissolved the legislature, leaving the province without a govern-



ment, when "the liberties of the people were at the mercy of their foes."

This usurpation on the part of the governor induced Otis, Adams, Warren, and others to call a town meeting in Boston, to consider and take action upon the crisis. As a result, it was concluded to hold a convention of the towns of the province in Faneuil Hall on the 12th of the present month, September, and the selectmen were directed to send out notices accordingly. This circumstance led Westminster to take its first pronounced action in respect to the troubles with the mother country. In the warrant for a special town meeting to be held Sept. 20, 1768, the subject was introduced in the following form:

"That whereas a Request has been Directed to the Selectmen from the Gentlemen, the Selectmen of the town of Boston, to assemble the Inhabitants Directly to take into Consideration the present Critical Situation into which the province is Involved by means of Dissolving the General Assembly; and to consider the measures proposed and Voted by the town of Boston with Respect to a Convention and to see whether the District will appoint a Committee to Joyne the proposed Convention and to make Choice of a Committee therefor."

#### Upon this article

"The vote was putt whether they would send a Committee to Joyne the proposed Convention at Funiueal Hall at Boston and it passed in the affirmative.

"Then chose Mr. Abner Holden for said service."

The convention met as proposed, ninety-six towns and eight districts being represented in it. Thomas Cushing, speaker of the house of representatives, was chosen moderator, and the clerk of the house, secretary.

A petition was prepared and sent to the governor, asking him to reassemble the legislature. He refused to consider the petition and ordered the convention to dissolve. The order was received with derision. The convention sat for six days, issuing at length a protest against the taxing of the colonies by parliament, against a standing army, and against the presence in their midst of a body of pensioners and hired soldiers. Meanwhile, armed troops arrived in Boston, which, with eight ships of war in the harbor, betokened peril to the liberties of the people. Popular feeling was roused to rage and an outbreak seemed imminent. But the leaders, though firm and determined, counseled moderation and no violence ensued.

After an interregnum of a year, during which great excitement prevailed throughout the country, a new legislature was convoked. The military had been retained with a view, it was believed, of intimidating the people and securing the election of members favorable to the crown. But the citizens were undaunted and instructed their representatives to maintain freedom of debate, to require that the troops be removed from



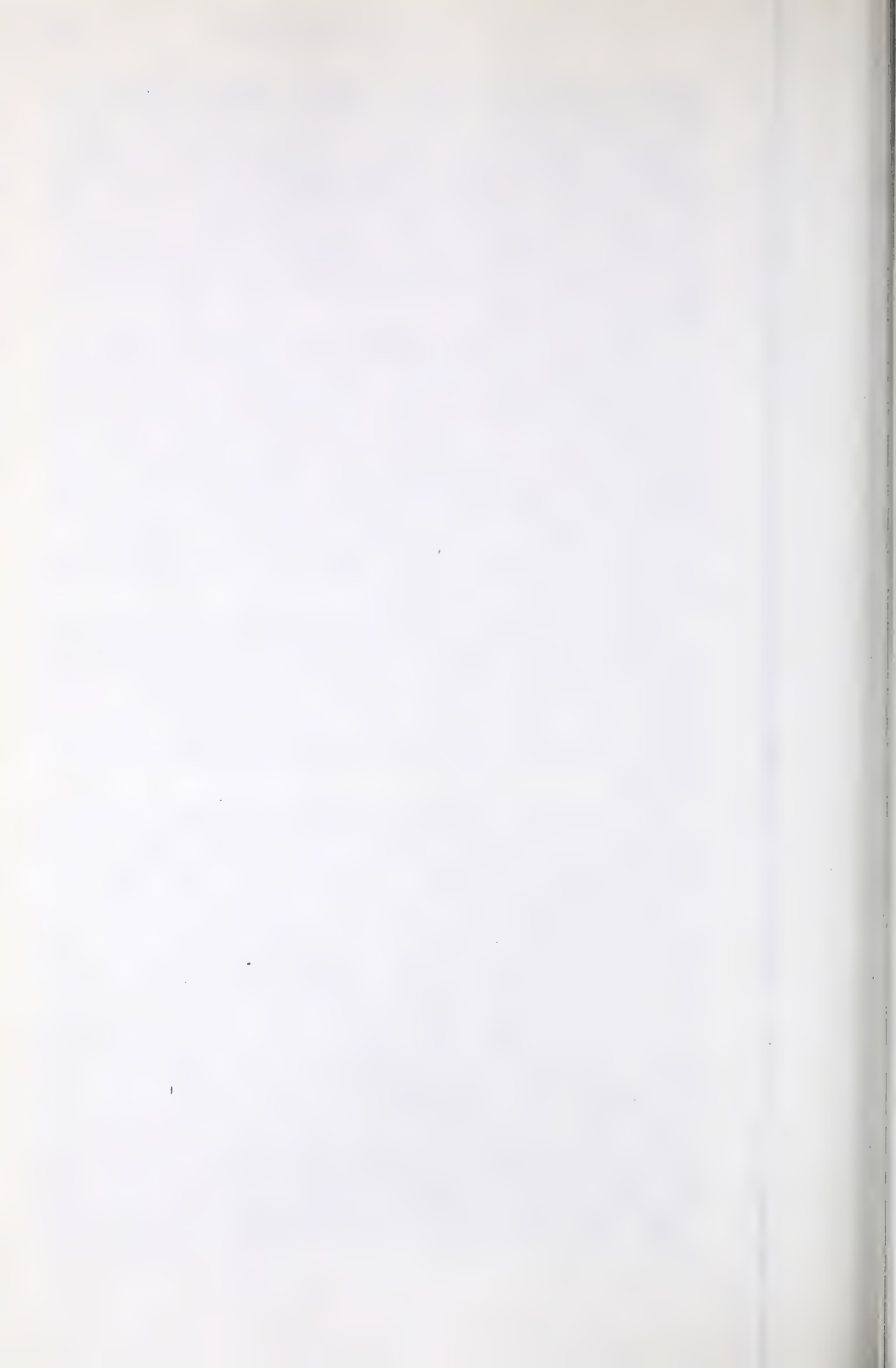
Boston, to oppose the raising of money to support the soldiery, and to make inquiry into the alleged misrepresentations of Governor Bernard to parliament in regard to the affairs of the province. Considerable conflict arose between the governor and the legislature, but the popular branch would not yield one jot or tittle of its hostility to all arbitrary measures on the part of the parent government and its provincial agents. So deep-seated and unrelenting was the animosity against the governor, that he withdrew from office, and Thomas Hutchinson was appointed to the place.

To quiet the colonies, the British ministry proposed to remove the tax from certain articles while retaining it on others, but this was not satisfactory. The principle of taxation was still involved, and only an entire renunciation of that principle would secure the end sought. And so the popular discontent continued. At the same time, the presence of soldiers in Boston was not only regarded as a constant menace to the rights of the people, but was a source of irritation and trouble. Collisions between the troops and individuals frequently occurred, culminating in the "Boston Massacre" of March 5, 1770, when three persons were killed and eight wounded, one of the latter dying of his injuries.

Once more Boston was stirred to indignation and wrath. A meeting of the inhabitants was held the next morning at Faneuil Hall, and by adjournment at the Old South Meetinghouse, in which a demand was made for the immediate removal of the troops. The governor hesitated, but the committee chosen to make the demand would not yield, and he at length consented. The troops were at once ordered out of town and the meeting dissolved.

About this time, a call for a retrogressive step on the part of parliament came, not from the colonies, but from the merchants of England. The refusal of the people across the water to buy English goods on account of the tax laid upon them was seriously affecting the commerce of the kingdom. The revenue question was thus reopened, a long controversy ensued, and finally imposts were removed from all articles except tea. But this did not serve the purpose designed. The spirited patriots were not to be pacified by any such halfway legislation. They demanded the repeal of the whole impost system and would accept nothing less. The general court of Massachusetts passed resolutions discouraging extravagance and the use of superfluities, and encouraging industry, frugality, and self-dependence. The people of the province were imbued with the same spirit. Under its influence domestic manufactures were greatly promoted, and a generous and patriotic rivalry sprang up even among the wives and daughters of the yeomen of New England as to who should spin the most yarn or weave the most cloth. "Homemade was the fashion, and in 1770, the gradu-





ating students at Cambridge took their degrees in homespun suits." Nor was this all. The continued tax on tea—a favorite and popular beverage in most circles—resulted in the almost entire disuse of the article, a substitute for it being found in certain herbs indigenous to the soil. Thus the very measures taken to reduce to greater subjection the people of the colonies, only served to nurture in them an enterprising, self-reliant spirit, and to fit them for a larger liberty and ultimate independence.

Moreover, the attempts of Governor Hutchinson to overawe and bring into subservience to his wishes the popular branch of the legislature, hastened matters on to their final issue. By special appeal to parliament he obtained new power to enforce his tyrannical decrees. This being made known by him when the general court was not in session, a meeting of the citizens of Boston, as was usual in such crises, was held, with John Hancock as moderator, by which an address relating to existing grievances was sent to the governor. He would not entertain it, on the ground that the meeting was an illegal gathering, and to recognize its right to act in the matter would be to encourage other towns to consider subjects beyond their jurisdiction. Whereupon, the meeting manifested great disapprobation and proceeded to a step which is said to have "included the whole Revolution." At the suggestion of Samuel Adams, a committee of correspondence consisting of twenty-one persons was chosen, for the purpose of opening communication with the various towns of the province, in order to obtain the considerate judgment of all parties concerned, and secure united action upon the course to be pursued in the exigency that had arisen in public affairs. James Otis was made chairman of this committee, and William Cooper, minister of the Old South Church, secretary. The committee pledged themselves to secrecy in their transactions. Samuel Adams was appointed to prepare a statement of the rights of the colonies; Joseph Warren, one on the existing violation of those rights; and Benjamin Church was to draft a letter upon the duties of the hour. These documents were sent out to all the towns with the accompanying request:—"A free communication of your sentiments to this town [Boston] of our common danger is earnestly solicited and will be gratefully received." The towns responded almost universally in the spirit of cordial sympathy with the doings of Boston and of patriotic enthusiasm and self-determination.

When this request of the Boston committee, with accompanying papers, reached Westminster, a meeting of the citizens was immediately called to act in the matter. At that meeting the following reply was submitted and adopted:

"To the Committee of Communication and Correspondence att Boston:—  
Gentlemen—The freeholders and other Inhabitants of Westminster in Town



meeting Legally assembled on the eleventh Day of February 1773, having with Due attention read and Considered a Letter from the town of Boston together with a State [ment] of the Rights of the Coloneys and of this province in perticular as also a List of infringements of their Rights. Unfaindly thank them in perticular for this Late Instance of their Vigilance in the Glorious Cause of Liberty and for their Constant patriotic Care to Keep Inviolat our Civil Constitution.

"We fully agree with them in the State of the Rights of the Coloneys and of this province in perticular and in the List of the Infringements of those Rights. We shall att all times heartily Joyne with them in all Legall Constitutional measures for the Recovery of those Inestemable priveliges wrested from us firmly to secure those that still Remain, for we are Senceable that Should we Renounce our Liberty and priveliges, we Should Renounce the Quality of Men the Rights of humanity and even our Duty to God and man. We have no Doubt but that the measures adopted by the Town of Boston in Communicating their Sentiments must be attended with verry Salitearry affects Not only to the province but to all the Coloneys and that the parliment of Great Britan will hearby Understand that it is not the Discontentedness of a faction (as has been Represented) but that the whole people are Senceable of the Burthens they labour under."

This reply was ordered to be attested by the clerk and sent to the Boston committee, which was accordingly done. Most of the towns of the province took similar action, at which Governor Hutchinson was very much displeased, and denounced it with unsparing severity. A long controversy between him and the legislature in relation to public affairs was carried on, neither party yielding, until he, upon being advised by the English government to avoid the further discussion of all agitating questions, quietly withdrew from it. The policy of establishing committees of correspondence, inaugurated by the citizens of Boston, proved most helpful to the cause of the colonies. It was, at a later day, adopted generally throughout the country, and did much, not only to bind the people of each colony together, but to unite the colonies to each other, preparing them to present an unbroken front against the common foe, both in council and in field, as the final crisis came hurrying on.

One of the great questions which rose to prominence in the already existing conflict between the parent government and its dependencies, related to the importation of tea. By an act of parliament it was made greatly advantageous to the merchant and shipping houses of Great Britain to send tea to America, and immense cargoes of that article were forwarded to these shores. But the people here refused, not only to use it, as before stated, but to receive it. The province of Pennsylvania declared that whoever favored admitting tea to the country was its enemy. The citizens of Boston and vicinity took a similar stand, and when merchant ships, filled with the condemned article, arrived in the harbor awaiting the delivery of their consignments, determined opposition at once arose. Repeated meetings were held, and popular excitement ran high. Masters of vessels made no attempt to unload their goods, and finally expressed to the patriotic leaders a willingness to take





them away and find markets elsewhere. But they were refused a clearance by the royal custom house officers. An appeal was made to the governor. Pending his decision, a gathering of seven thousand persons had assembled at the Old South Meetinghouse, awaiting, under the pressure of intense feeling, his action. At length, long after dark, his refusal to let the vessels go was received by the vast assembly with tokens of mingled resentment and high resolve. "We can do no more to save the country," shouted Samuel Adams, with all the energy he could command. At that moment a cry was heard outside like the warwhoop of native savages, sounded by a band of forty or fifty men in Indian costume, coming from no one knew where, who hurried down the street to the wharf at which the tea-laden ships were moored, and after setting a guard to prevent intrusion, proceeded to throw into the sea whatever of the contraband goods they could find. This done, they retired as mysteriously as they had appeared, and the people, returning at once to their homes, left the town as quiet as if nothing had transpired. This was the famous "Boston Tea Party of Dec. 16, 1773."

When the tidings of this event reached London, great consternation and wrath were aroused among the ruling forces there. A movement to punish Boston and bring to terms the refractory town was set on foot in parliament, resulting in the passage of retaliatory measures, among which the "Boston Port Bill" was the most conspicuous and offensive. Governor Hutchinson was superseded by General Gage, who, as a military man, familiar with army tactics, was deemed more competent to enforce the arbitrary decrees of the king and ministry.

The Boston Port Bill, which provided for the closing of its harbor to the commerce of the world and putting an end to its trade, with a view of crippling its leading men financially and starving its population into servile submission, was enacted in March, 1774, and went into operation on the 1st of June, following. At twelve o'clock on that day the custom house was shut and the courts of the province were suspended. The people made no demonstration. The streets were silent as the grave. Only the meetinghouse bells were heard tolling, as it were, the death knell of liberty. The patriotic citizens were not blind nor indifferent to the deplorable condition of things in the town and province, to the injustice and cruelty perpetrated upon them, nor to the discouraging and threatening aspect of public affairs. But they remained resolute and persistent still, sure that under Providence a way would open to them out of all the existing troubles.

General Gage arrived in Boston just before the odious Port Bill went into effect, and on the eve of the convening of the general court. He at once put himself in antagonism with that body and its constituency also, by rejecting several of the most



able and influential members of the council in whose appointment he had a controlling voice, and by removing its sittings to Salem. In anticipation of coming events, a project was inaugurated by the leading men of Boston to secure a meeting of representatives from all the colonies, that they might confer and take action in regard to the great questions of the times, and delegates were appointed to attend such meeting. Other colonies were consulted, and, generally concurring in what was proposed, the first Continental Congress convened at Philadelphia, Sept. 4, 1774.

Meanwhile Boston was suffering seriously under the oppressive restrictions that had been imposed upon her, as was clearly foreseen. Their effect upon the financial and industrial prosperity of the town was disastrous. Not only was trade suspended and the mercantile portion of the community made to suffer, but the humblest individual had part in the common injustice and in the common sacrifice. "Laborers were thrown out of employment, the poor lacked bread to eat, and a general gloom pervaded the streets. Great sympathy, however, for those thus made to suffer was manifested throughout the province in substantial and helpful ways, and contributions from beyond the confines of the Massachusetts colony were sent for the relief of the needy. Inland towns seemed to vie with each other not only in verbal declarations of friendship and compassion, but in generous donations of the necessities of life." Drove of cattle were sent from Connecticut even, to feed the hunger of the beleaguered town.

At the same time the people at large, as if by instinct, were giving considerable attention to what proved to be preparations for armed resistance to tyranny and wrong. The military companies placed themselves under stricter discipline. Unused muskets and old knapsacks were hunted up and put in order for use, powder and ball were provided, and every one seemed anxious to be properly accoutered for military service. A martial spirit combined with a zeal for liberty seemed to take possession of and animate all classes and conditions alike, blending all feelings and interests in one common cause.

In the same behalf, conventions were held at different points for consultation upon the state of public affairs and to devise ways and means of counteracting and overthrowing the designs of despotic power. The governor attempted to prevent the holding of these gatherings, but in vain. To fortify himself and execute his plans by forcible measures, if he should see fit, he took possession of what arms and ammunition he could, and caused them to be stored at Castle William, now Fort Independence, in Boston harbor. He also had fortifications erected on Boston neck, thus virtually declaring the town to be in a state of siege, though he protested otherwise.

The interior towns kept themselves well informed of what





was going on, and from time to time took such action as was deemed needful for the common safety and for any contingency that might arise. Westminster was not behind other municipalities in her loyalty to the principles of freedom and her readiness to stand firmly and bravely in their defense. A meeting of "the Votable Inhabitants" was held Aug. 3, 1774,

"To Take Into Consideration the Distressed State of the province, and Consider and Conclude upon some method proper to releve ourselves out of the present Imbaresements."

At this meeting, it was "voted that the Inhabitants would signe a Covenant that might be Drawn up and laid before the Town," and Dea. Nathan Wood, Abner Holden, Doctor Harvey, Ensign John Brooks, and Nathan Howard were chosen a committee to prepare a form of agreement for consideration at an adjourned meeting. On the following Tuesday, Aug. 9th, this committee reported as desired. After a long debate the town voted "almost unanimously" to accept the proposed covenant and affix their signatures thereto.

That covenant was not placed upon the pages of the clerk's book of records, but happily the original document has been found, with the names of the signers in their own hand writing attached, and a copy of it is here submitted.

"We the Inhabitants of the Town of Westminster Haveing att a Town Meeting Duly Considered the Distressing Circumstances of this province by Reason of Several Late acts of the British parlement, (which in a Greate measure affects all the Governments on the Contenant) whereby our Charter priveliges and Liberties in particular are greatly obstructed and many of them wholly taken away from us which we think is verry arbetrary and opressive therefore think ourselves under a Nessecesity to Deminish our much Imbarised Trade with Greate Britan viz. that we cannot nor will we either by our Selves or any for or under us Diractly or Indiractly After the Last Day of August Instant (unlese all our Charter Rights are Restored which are taken from us by the abovesaid acts,) purchase of Greate Britan, or any that shall Import theirfrom after said Day any more Cloathing or anything used theifor or any ornament thereunto belonging Nor any Tea or any other Kind of East India Comodites Except Saltpeter and Spices and medicenal Drugs that shall be Imported after Said Day—Nor any Liquors used for Drink or any Kind of provision (wine only excepted) and all Earthern and Stone Ware and all Clocks and Watches Imported—

"Our Country being Suffecent to Support us with most of the Nessecesaries of Life, we promise and Ingage to apply ourselves to Industry and a more plaine way of Liveing, being the only way to save ourselves from Impending Ruine—we are further of opinion that Whatsoever method shall be agreed upon by the Congress as they are the Representatives of the Body of the people ought to be adheard to with firmness and Resolution and that we are willing to Defend our Liberties in all proper and Constitutional ways. And We each one for ourselves Covenant and agree with Each other that we will stand to and abide by this our Covenant unless alteration be Nessecesary by Reason of the Result of the Congress which is to meet in September Next. The above we Subscribe unto.

"ABNER HOLDEN,  
NATHAN WOOD,  
JOSEPH MILLER,

ELISHA JACKSON,  
RICHARD BARNES,  
JOSIAH JACKSON,

JOSEPH HOSLEY,  
JOSEPH SPAULDING,  
ANDREW DARBY,





RICHARD GRAVES,  
JABEZ BIGELOW,  
JEREMIAH EVERETT,  
NATHAN WHITNEY,  
JOHN RAND,  
JOHN BROOKS,  
JOHN WOODWARD,  
JOHN FOSKETT,  
NORMAN SEAVER,  
ASA TAYLOR,  
ABRAHAM STONE,  
AMOS CONANT,  
SAMUEL WHITNEY, JR.

ELISHA BIGELOW,  
SAMUEL MERRIAM,  
JOSHUA EVERETT,  
SAMUEL SAWIN,  
EDWARD JACKSON,  
ZECHARIAH RAND,  
WILLIAM BICKFORD,  
DAVID MAYNARD,  
DAVID BEMIS,  
NATHAN PIERCE,  
THOMAS CONANT,  
SOLOMON GEARFIELD,  
SETH HERRINGTON."

NATHAN HOWARD,  
JONA WARREN SMITH,  
SIMON GATES,  
EDMUND BEMIS,  
NATHANIEL WOODWARD,  
SAMUEL NORCROSS,  
JOSHIAH WHEELER,  
NATHAN DARBY,  
JAMES CLARK,  
ZACCHEUS BEMIS,  
EPHRAIM WETHERBEE,  
JOHN DARBY,

The document is complete as far as it goes, and with the signatures fills the two pages of a half sheet of foolscap paper. There are indications tending to show that the other half has been torn from the one preserved, and it may be presumed that there were upon it names of other well-known residents, who would be likely to take the same self-sacrificing and heroic stand in behalf of their own and their country's liberties.

At an adjournment of the same meeting, held Sept. 28th, Abner Holden was chosen a delegate "to the General Congress at Concord on the Second Tuesday of Oct. next." Meanwhile, the convention of delegates from all the colonies, already referred to, met at Philadelphia and organized "the Continental Congress," with Peyton Randolph of Virginia, president, which transacted important business of a public and uncompromisingly patriotic character, calculated to consolidate the different sections of the country in one common purpose, and to give hope, courage, and inspiration to every friend of justice and liberty.

Thus were things moving quietly but steadily on to a great crisis—a crisis precipitated by the stupid perversity and obstinacy of Governor Gage. His blunders were the opportunities of the patriotic leaders. Having prorogued by arbitrary decree the provincial legislature in June, he did nothing towards calling a new one till September, when he ordered an election of members to meet in Salem on the 5th of October following, but before that day arrived, deeming the assembling of that body inexpedient, revoked the order. The members who had been previously chosen, however, after mutual consultation, resolved to come together agreeably to the original summons. About ninety were in attendance, Dea. Nathan Wood of Westminster, who was elected to the house of representatives on the 28th of September, being among them. Convened without authority from the royal governor, they could do nothing as a branch of the existing government, but, as per preconcerted arrangement, proceeded to establish a legislative body by themselves, claiming to act, not by authority of the crown of England, but by authority of the people whose agents they were. This body they denominated "the Provincial Congress." Having organized, it adjourned to meet at Concord, Oct. 11th, when Mr.



Abner Holden appeared as special delegate from this town, removing thence to Cambridge, in which place two sessions were held, beginning Oct. 17th and Nov. 23d, respectively, making four in all. This was "the First Provincial Congress." Its founding opened a new epoch, not only in New England affairs, but in American history.

During its proceedings this congress appointed Henry Gardner of Stow receiver general of the province, in place of Harrison Gray, treasurer, elected by royal authority, and all persons and towns having charge of public moneys were advised to make payment to him; £20,000 were voted for the public defense, and it was ordered that 12,000 men be enrolled in the different towns, one-third of whom should be "minute men," prepared to march, in a case of emergency, to a given point at a minute's notice. The towns and districts were counseled to see that each minute man, not already provided therewith, be furnished with arms and ammunition and put under discipline in preparation for military service. Corresponding action was taken in other important regards, and provision was made for a second congress which convened at Cambridge on the first day of February, 1775, and continued to hold sessions at Concord and Watertown till May 29th, when it was dissolved. A third met at Watertown, May 31st, and continued in session till July 19th, when it adjourned *sine die*. So was there a new government established, equipped, and in actual control of the affairs of the province, before the governor seemed to realize that his power had gone from him and gone forever. When he attempted to convene a legislature under royal auspices, at the usual time in May, 1775, he found how weak and impotent he was. Indeed, before that time arrived, Lexington and Concord took their places in history, and British rule in Massachusetts had come to a perpetual end.

Westminster was in no wise dilatory in responding to the action of the Provincial Congress. At a meeting held Dec. 13, 1774, the citizens

"*Voted*, that the former and present Constables and Collector in the town of Westminster who Now Have province money in their hands, Do Not pay the Same into Harrison Gray Esq. of Boston: and also Voted that they pay the Same to Henry Gardner Esqr. Who is by the Proventiall Congress appointed to Receive the Same, and voted and Resolved that a Receight under the Hands of the said Henry Gardner Esqr produced by the Respective Constables and Collectors Shall fully and finally Discharge Said Constables and Ccollectors for any Somes they shall pay.

"*Voted* to purchase five Barrils of powder and one Thousand weight of Lead and Granted one hundred and Ten Dollars for Said Buisness and Voted to purchase 300 flints.

"*Voted* that the Town will Have Nothing to Doe with the Melletearry Company and Racommend to the officers to appoint a Day to Settle the millitearry and Chuse their officers and Regulate the Melitia as they think proper and Each Soldier to Have a Voice in the afaire and that they Doe it Directly."





While these things were going on hereabouts, matters throughout the country were ripening to their consummation. The Continental Congress at Philadelphia, after long and thoughtful deliberation, had taken strong ground against the continued usurpations of England and had issued appeals and recommendations to the people of the provinces, in the form of resolutions calculated to encourage and secure united and decisive action on their part, and to prepare them for whatever duty might be required at their hands. Pursuant thereto, at a meeting held Jan. 4, 1775, Westminster

*"Voted and resolved to adopt the whole of the Contentall Congress Resolves Respecting this province, and Voted Strictly to adhear Theirunto and Voted to appoint three persons to see that the association agreement be strictly adheard unto and observed agreeable to the proventiall Congress directions."*

Anticipating trouble ahead, it was, at a meeting held March 29, 1775, voted "that all persons in town capeable of doing millterey Duty are desired to Doe it under their proper officers without any objections." Also "voted and chose Doctor Zachariah Harvey, Capt. Daniel Hoar, and Mr. Abner Holden, Mr. John Foscett, Mr. Edmund Bemis, as a Committee of Inspection agreeable to Congress Resolves."

It was not long before the wisdom of the Provincial Congress in regard to the raising of "minute men" was made clearly apparent. The people of Boston and vicinity, though seemingly quiet, were yet diligently preparing for the conflict at arms which, with clear-eyed vision, they saw was not far away. By cunning devices were they laying up stores of arms and ammunition at convenient points for use in time of need. Cannon were carried into the country concealed in loads of manure; half-barrels of powder and candle boxes filled with cartridges were put into marketmen's wagons as they went home at night, and so taken away without the knowledge of the royal authorities. This went on till considerable supplies had been gathered at Concord, Salem, and other localities. Governor Gage, learning of this, determined to gain possession of these stores and devote them to the king's service and at once set out to carry his purpose into effect. It was this that on the 19th of April, 1775, made Lexington and Concord historic and inaugurated the Revolution.

When the tidings of what had transpired at the places named reached Westminster, which was about 11 o'clock A. M. of the same day, three companies of "minute men," raised for the special purpose of meeting such an emergency, started immediately for the scene of conflict, but not reaching there in season to participate in the stirring events of the occasion, followed on to Cambridge, where they remained under pay of the province for about seven days, or until all apprehension of another sally



from the British troops was dispelled and all immediate occasion for further service was removed. These men, ninety-one in number, of whom twenty-seven enlisted as regular soldiers and were enrolled among the continental forces, were under the command of Captains John Estabrook, Elisha Jackson, and Noah Miles, respectively. Their names will appear in a tabulated statement at the close of this chapter. Capt. Nicholas Dike, with an improvised corps of five men, also hurried away to serve the common cause.

The "Lexington Alarm," as the affair of April 19th was called, put a new aspect upon the condition of things in the province and required special and prompt action on the part of the patriot party. The Provincial Congress, which had been temporarily adjourned, came together again at an early date and caused a circular letter to be issued in its name to the towns, urging upon the people the importance of raising troops "to defend their wives and children from the butchering hands of an inhuman soldiery," and entreating them to encourage the enlistment of men with all possible dispatch. The raising of an army had been voted, and the appeal was made to each town to do what it could to fill up the ranks. Moreover, the towns were asked to take and support the poor of Boston, driven therefrom by the peril and suffering to which they were exposed. To make this proposed project bear equally upon all communities, an assignment had been made to each of them respectively, thirty-one being allotted to Westminster as her just share of the common burden. The towns were furthermore asked to express an opinion in regard to heeding the requisition of Governor Gage for the election of representatives to a Provincial Assembly, to be held as usual by royal proclamation on the last Wednesday of May.

At a meeting held May 26th, the last one called "In his Majesty's Name," for the purpose of considering and acting upon the several topics suggested by the Provincial Congress, the town of Westminster voted that no attention should be paid to the writ issued by Governor Gage convoking a General Assembly. A committee of correspondence was chosen to be in communication with the same committee of the town of Boston, touching matters pertaining to the common welfare and safety; said committee consisting of Abner Holden, Capt. Nicholas Dike, Doctor Harvey, John Fosket, and Ensign John Brooks. It also voted "to receive and support our proportionable part of the poor of Boston." Pursuant to this vote thirty-one persons were taken and cared for by the town soon afterward.

To indicate the mode of proceeding in cases of this sort, the following certificate, found in a miscellaneous lot of old papers, is inserted, presumably sent to the selectmen of Westminster.



"BOSTON, Dec. 9, 1775.

"The Bearer, Mrs. Sarah Browne and her family removing out of the Town of Boston, recommended to the Charity and Assistance of our Benevolent Sympathizing Brethren in the Several Towns in this Province.

"By order of the Committee of Donations,

EDWD L. SANDERS, Clerk.

"Five in Family.

"To the Selectmen and Committees of Correspondence in the several Towns in the Province of Massachusetts Bay."

Dea. Nathan Wood, who on the fourth day of January had been chosen delegate to the second Provincial Congress, was, at the meeting now under notice, appointed to represent the town in the third congress, which was to meet at Watertown five days afterward, May 31st.

This congress was now the only acknowledged government in the province. While claiming to act in the name of the people of Massachusetts, it acknowledged allegiance to the Continental Congress, which represented all the provinces acting together for the common welfare. To that body, therefore, it made application for permission "to take up and exercise civil government as soon as may be." Sanction having been received, an assembly was called by order of the Continental Congress, to meet on the 19th of July following. On the 10th of July the town chose Dea. Nathan Wood to represent it in the General Assembly, which was designed and destined to supersede the Provincial Congress and become the first legislature under the new regime of what was afterward the State of Massachusetts.

While this was going on in respect to civil affairs, great events of a different nature were transpiring in and about Boston. Governor Gage had taken possession of the town and within its boundaries was having everything his own way. He had openly denounced those who refused allegiance to his authority as rebels, threatening vengeance upon them unless they submitted to him, and offering pardon to all who would do so, excepting Samuel Adams and John Hancock, whose offenses he deemed too great to be in any way condoned or allowed to escape punishment. The Provincial Congress met this manifesto by a corresponding one denouncing in equally strong terms all offenders against the liberties of the country, and offering pardon to all who would renounce allegiance to King George and espouse the cause of the colonies, except Governor Gage, his prominent supporters, and those native Americans who went out with the British troops and assisted in the robberies and murders of the 19th of April. Before it was made public, however, another conflict at arms made its issuance needless. While Governor Gage was strengthening his position in Boston by a concentration of the soldiery under his command, by fortifications at suitable points,





and an accumulation of military equipments, and was laying plans to take possession of Dorchester and Charlestown heights as a further security to himself, the Provincial Congress, aware of his movements and intentions, resolved to forestall his plans and prevent the execution of his purposes. In response to its call a large number of troops had already gathered at Cambridge, Watertown, and Roxbury, ready for any service to which they might be assigned. They were a motley crowd, ununiformed, undisciplined, unused to the arts and manners of military life and of the movements of a battlefield. But there were among them a few trained leaders, who had seen service and who knew what was needful to a successful issue at arms. Generals Ward of Shrewsbury, Thomas of Kingston, Putnam from Connecticut, and Colonel Prescott of Pepperell, by a sort of natural selection, came into command of different sections of this vast assemblage, and, by counsel and drill, prepared them in a measure for what was to follow. These men were in close communication with the master spirits of the provincial government, and mutual consultation was held at frequent intervals in regard to the policy to be pursued and action to be taken.

At length it was decided to thwart Governor Gage's designs by taking possession of and fortifying the heights of Charlestown, and await the course of the royal governor with reference thereto. The night of the 16th of June was fixed upon to commence operations in the carrying of that decision into effect. What followed—the occupying of Breed's Hill and surrounding territory, the hasty throwing up of defenses and redoubts, the surprise of the governor and his subordinates, the movement of the royal troops, the repeated repulse by the colonial forces, and their own final retreat upon the third attack on account of exhausted ammunition—all pertaining to what is known as the Battle of Bunker Hill, in which victory nominally perched upon the banners of the British troops—this is a matter of familiar history and needs not to be repeated.

The war was now actually begun, and leaders and people yielded at once to that conclusion and made up their minds to prepare as rapidly as possible for the duties and sacrifices it required. Of the action of both the Provincial and Continental Congresses immediately afterward, of the renewed efforts to raise and equip an army, and the success attending those efforts, of the choice of George Washington as commander-in-chief of the American forces, of his assuming charge of the same at Cambridge, of the investment and siege of Boston, resulting in its evacuation by Governor Gage and all his subsidiaries on Sunday, the 17th of the following March, giving the complete control of Massachusetts to the patriots of the time,—of these and corresponding events it is not the province of this volume to treat.



The town of Westminster, only three days before the battle referred to, wholly unappraised of the impending conflict, "taking into consideration the Critical and alarming Circumstances of this Colony with regard to the Calamity of Warr, in which we are unhappily Engaged," and with a view of devising and putting in motion "some Suitable method to Raise a Reinforcement to Stand Ready in any Imagery to assist our Brethren in the Army,"

"Voted to raise thirty men to be at a minutes warning with horses and all implements of warr and that the Several officers belonging to the several Companies" have charge of the same.

It may be remarked here that immediately after the "Lexington Alarm," a company of fifty Westminster men was regularly enlisted for eight months' service and placed under the command of Capt. Edmund Bemis, as noted more in detail on a subsequent page. They were at the battle of Bunker Hill, either as active participants in the conflict or as a reserve force awaiting command to the front in case of need. They were in charge of Edmund Bemis, who had been promoted to a captaincy immediately after the Lexington and Concord affair. They enlisted for eight months, at the expiration of which time, about the first of January, 1776, they were discharged and returned home. Their first pay-roll, dated Aug. 8th, is preserved in the State archives; also a second, dated two months later. They were in Col. John Whitcomb's regiment, and took part in the siege of Boston. One of their number, Reuben Miles, died Sept. 15, 1775.

As time passed on, the breach that had opened between the mother country and her American colonies grew wider and wider with ever diminishing prospect of its being healed. Both parties continued with increasing diligence their preparations for a vigorous prosecution of the conflict. With the continuation of this state of things arose the idea of a separation of the two—the idea of American independence. Received at first with aversion, it soon came to be regarded by more thoughtful people as the only solution of the problem. An act of the Provisional Legislature of Massachusetts, looking to this consummation and no doubt helping it on, was passed at its April session in 1776, ordering the omission of the words "In his Majesty's name" from all legal documents, and inserting in its place, "In the name of the Government and people of Mass.," etc. The selectmen of Westminster issued their warrants for town meetings and transacted other business incumbent upon them in accordance with the provisions of that order.

About the same time another order was passed by the acting Legislature, directing the people of the several towns of the province to give instructions to their representatives for the following session upon the question of independence. At a meeting of the inhabitants of Westminster, held June 10th,





"The Vote was putt whether the Inhabitants of the Town of Westminster would (if the Continentall Congress Should Declare Independance on the Crown of Greate Britan) Stand by and Support them in the measure with their lives and fortunes and the Vote passed in the afarmitive unanimously."

By such assurances on the part of the great majority of the towns of the province, and on the part of other sections of the country as well, the members of the Continental Congress were unquestionably encouraged to make the immortal Declaration of July 4th, the same year, confident that, in doing so, they were but voicing the convictions and answering the demand of the people of the land, and that the people would be true to them and to the principles which they embodied in that "Magna Charta" of American liberty.

No further action was taken by the town with respect to the affairs of the province and country during this eventful year. The war was going slowly on. Troops, when called for, were raised by volunteer enlistment without the intervention of the town. Minute men were ready for any emergency. Soldiers from Westminster were in the service from the beginning, entering it at different dates, under differnt captains, in different regiments, for longer or shorter periods, as will be more fully shown at the close of this chapter.

It was in the summer of 1776 that Captain Nicholas Dike was commissioned colonel, put in command of a regiment, and assigned to duty in what was called the "Dorchester Coast Defence," which was virtually the defense of Boston, being stationed at Dorchester Heights, now South Boston. His staff was composed of Henry Haskett, Shirley, *lieutenant colonel*; Noah Goodwin, South Hadley, *major*; Daniel Johnson, Harvard, *chaplain*; Jabez Brown, Stow, *adjutant*; Jeremiah Everett, Westminster, *surgeon*; Abishai Crossman, Uxbridge, *surgeon's mate*; Joseph Holden, Westminster, *quartermaster*.

The captains under Colonel Dike, Dec. 1, 1766, were: Caleb Brooks, Cambridge; Stephen Penniman, Braintree; Oliver Lyman, Northampton; Abijah Bangs, Harwich; John Minott, Chelmsford; Ezekiel Knowlton, Templeton; Manasseh Sawyer, Lancaster; Joseph Stetson, Duxbury; Samuel Baldwin, Northbridge; John Hartwell, Lincoln; Moses Harrington, Grafton; Theophilus Wilder, Hingham. Some changes in the commands took place from time to time. At other dates there were in Colonel Dike's regiment Captains Benjamin Richardson, Oxford; Reuben Munn, West Springfield; Abial Pierce, Abington; Samuel Taylor, —; and perhaps others.

The orderly book of Colonel Dike has been carefully preserved, and is now in the possession of his great-grandson, Mr. Sewall Morse, who kindly permits the writer to make a few extracts for these pages. They are given not only as pertaining to the relation existing between a prominent citizen of Westminster



and the great events transpiring at the opening period of our national history, but as illustrating the military methods of Revolutionary times. They are mostly orders of Colonel Dike himself, though a small percentage of them came from the brigade commander, or other officer of high rank in the service. The first is of the latter kind, and was issued at the opening of the campaign :

“HEAD QUARTERS, BOSTON, Aug. 16, 1776.

“Parole, *York*; Countersign, *War*.”

“The Officers and Soldiers of the new raised regiments will strictly conform themselves to the rules and regulations of the Continental army. A Sargeant's Guard will be kept in each fort on Dorchester [Heights] which will be daily relieved at 8 o'clock in y<sup>e</sup> morning. All the men off duty are to Fatigue Eight hours in a day, Sunday and rainy days excepted. The officers will choose such hours as are most convenient—the rolls of each Company will be called morning and evening, and delinquents, if there should be any such, Noticed. Each Regiment will exercise at least one hour in a day at such times as the Commanding Officer shall Order. As soon as the Regiments are settled, the reveille is to beat at Day-Break. The troop at 8 o'clock in y<sup>e</sup> morning, the retreat at Sunset, and the tattoo at 8 o'clock in the Evening. The drum and fife Majors of each Regiment will pay particular attention to the improvement of Martial Musick. The Commanding Officers of the Regiment are to give in to the Brigade Major a weekly return of y<sup>e</sup> State of their Regiments, on Friday y<sup>e</sup> Adjutant may have a copy of the return of the Brigade Major. The Adjutant will attend at Head Quarters daily at 11 o'clock for orders, who will keep both General and Regimental Orders with a detail of y<sup>e</sup> duty of y<sup>e</sup> Regiments in a fair book. Each Field Officer and the Choir of Officers for each Company will keep an orderly book in the which they will keep all General and Regimental Orders. The Officers and Soldiers are to be acquainted with the Rules and Regulations of the Continental Army by reading a part of them to the Regiment weekly so that the whole may be read every month. General and Regimental Orders to be read daily. The Commanding Officer of each Regiment will give to the Commander in Chief immediately a return of the state of the Arms and Ammunition of their Regiments that the deficiency may be supplied. [No signature.]

“After Orders August y<sup>e</sup> 19, 1776.”

“The Captains of the Companies are to charge their men with all the Ammunition, Flints, Cartridge-boxes, &c &c, that are delivered to them at any time that they may be returned again at y<sup>e</sup> end of the Campaign or they will be accountable for them and in case they are not used in action they will be Stopp<sup>d</sup> out of their pay.

“PELEG WADSWORTH A. D. Coms.”

The first recorded order of Colonel Dike was as follows :

“R. O. [Regimental Orders.] That a Quarter Guard be kept in this Regiment consisting of 1 Subaltern, 1 Sargeant, 1 Corp<sup>l</sup> and 18 privates, and a guard for tools on the heights of Dorchester consisting of 1 Sargeant 1 Corp<sup>l</sup> 10 privates, that no Commissioned Officer be allowed to be absent from the Camp without leave from the Commanding Officer of the Regiment, and that no non-commissioned Officer or Soldier be absent from the Company which he belongs to, that the taptoo be beat at half after 8 o'clock in the evening, that there be no disturbance or disorder in y<sup>e</sup> Camp and that the revalley beat every morning at half after four, that no sutler or other person be allowed to sell any spirituous liquors within the limits of the Incampment of this Regiment without first obtaining leave from the Commanding Officer of the same.

NICHOLAS DIKE, Colonel.”



"DORCHESTER, Aug. 28, 1776.

"R. O. Parole, *Adams*; Countersign, *Liberty*. All, both Officers and Soldiers on duty, except one in each mess, to turn out on fatigue at 7 o'clock and remain on till two in the afternoon, each Commanding Officer to turn out his Company at 4 o'clock for exercise till further orders.

"NICHOLAS DIKE Col."

"HEAD QUARTERS BOSTON Aug. 30, 1776.

"Parole, *Industry*; Countersign, *Expedition*. As every kind of gaming whatever is pernicious in the army, the General strictly forbids any gaming whatever and commands all officers to exert themselves to prevent such injurious and scandalous Practices and to bring every transgressor to condign punishment. Col. Dike's Regiment will furnish a guard of 1 Sargeant, 1 Corporal, and 12 privates, with blankets and accouterments to relieve the magazine at Jamaica Plains, they will march from Roxbury tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock when the Officer will receive orders from the Brigade Major."

"DORCH<sup>R</sup> Sept 3, 1776.

"The Col. orders that the men belonging to this Regiment do not pass and repass the Inhabitants' enclosures where there are not any roads and that all Officers are careful to see that their men do not do any damage to the Inhabitants.

N. DIKE, Col."

"DORCHESTER ye 6th Sept. 1776.

"To Lieut. Hambleton.—You are hereby ordered to take Sargeant and party and reconnoiter the fields and enclosures adjacent to my Regiment at Roxbury after the tattoo beat and take up all persons rifling or plundering any of the inhabitants fields or enclosures and send them to guard and make return to myself at 3 o'clock in the morning and let no man know of this on any account.

N. DIKE, Col."

"HEAD QUARTERS BOSTON 3<sup>d</sup> Oct. 1776.

"Parole, *Congress*; Countersign, *Army*. The Colonels of each Regiment are to make out their abstracts for the pay of their men for the month of September and that part of August while they were in the service reckoning from the day they marched from home. The pay allowed by Congress is as follows per Calendar month. Coll. 50 Dollars; Lieut. Coll. 40 Dollars; Major 33 1-3 Dollars; Capt. 26 2-3 Dollars; Lieut. 18 Dollars; Ensign 13 1-3 Dollars; Adjutant, 18 1-3 Dollars; Qr Master, 18 1-3 Dollars; Chaplain 33 1-3 Dollars; Surgeon, 33 1-3 Dollars; Surgeon's Mate 18 Dollars; Sargeant 8 Dollars; Corporals 7 1-3 Dollars; Drummers, 7 1-3 Dollars; Fifers, 7 1-3 Dollars; Privates, 6 2-3 Dollars."

"REGIMENTAL ORDERS 13 Oct 1776.

"That the Commanding Officer of each Company in this Regiment make a return immediately of the State of his Company, of the sick absent, where they are and by whose leave they are absent that they may be immediately sent for if able to attend.

NICH<sup>S</sup>. DIKE, Col."

"HEAD QUARTERS BOSTON 23<sup>d</sup> Oct 1776.

"After orders. A General Court Martial will set tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock at Capt. Brooks Quarters in Boston—Col. Dike Prest. Col Dike's Regiment gives 2 Captains 4 Subalterns; Col. Francis' gives 2 Captains, 4 Subalterns, members. Capt. Lyman, Judge Advocate. Adj<sup>t</sup>. Brown will attend the Court Martial. The Adj<sup>t</sup> will return the names of the Officers warned for the Ct. Martial to the President at their meeting.

"C. WADSWORTH, M. B."





"HEAD QUARTERS BOSTON Oct the 25, 1776.

"Parole, *Waterbury*; Countersign, *Arnold*. Isaac Woodward of Capt. Brook's Co. in Col. Dikes Regiment tried by a General Court Martial of which Col. Dike was Prest. for Desertion, Plead Guilty and is sentenced to pay the expense of bringing him back and a fine of 20 shillings to be stoped out of his wages for the Hospital and to be Reprimanded before the Regiment he belongs to.

"The General approves the sentence and orders it to be put in execution accordingly."

In an order for guards on Dorchester Heights, to be furnished by Colonels Dike and Francis, is the following direction :

"These guards are to be paraded in a grand parade agreed on by Cols. Dike and Francis at the usual time and marched off handsomely and in good order. No man is to be brought on the grand parade for guards with a long beard and slovenly habit, &c."

"HEAD QUARTERS, BOSTON, Feb 10, 1777.

"Parole, *Jersey*; Countersign, *Putnam*. The General expresses his high-est disapprobation of the Conduct of Capt. Moses Harrington and entirely approves the vigilance of Col. Dike in arresting him, but as Capt. Harrington acknowledges the crime with marks of self-disapprobation, the General permits him to be released from his arrest and to return to his duty after he has received a severe reprimand from Col. Dike before the Officers of the Regiment at Dorchester."

The following is the last order of Colonel Dike to be found in the book referred to :

"REGIMENTAL ORDERS Mar. 23, 1777.

"It has been often repeated that former General and Regimental Orders were to be strictly observed and as Gen. Heath is expected every day to visit this Department and it is also expected that all former orders will be strictly observed especially such as roll-calling, absence from camp and daily exercising their men, and any that fails will be properly taken notice of.

"NICH'S. DIKE Col."

"HEAD QUARTERS BOSTON Mar. 30, [1777.]

"Col. Dike's Regiment are to return their Ammunition, Cartrouch-Boxes, Drums and Fifes, Cooking utensils, Medicine chest, &c and upon producing a Certificate of their delivery will receive a warrant for their pay."

This seems to have closed the eight months' service, for which the regiment of Colonel Dike was recruited and assigned to duty on Dorchester Heights. It does not appear that he had any subsequent command or served in any other military capacity during the war, though he may have done so at a later period. The extracts quoted, as well as others from the same source for which there is no room on these pages, show him to have been a faithful, vigilant, patriotic officer, loyal and true to the cause of the colonies and to what that cause represented, in the tented field as in the counsels of the town with whose early history he was so closely and honorably identified.



We return once more to what transpired nearer home, within the boundaries of Westminister herself, and under the direction of her earnest and devoted citizens. On the 5th of March, 1777, at a meeting held for the purpose of adopting some effectual method of raising the quota of men assigned to the town by the general court, in order to complete the fifteen battalions asked of the province by the Continental Congress, it was first voted to offer a bounty of twenty pounds to each volunteer enlisting for three years' service, but at an adjourned meeting this action was rescinded, on the ground, very likely, that the land and money offered by the provincial government was sufficient to secure the needed recruits.

At a meeting held June 12th of this year, Abner Holden was chosen a committee to deal with suspected tories, agreeably to an act of the general assembly, and Captain Hoar, Captain Bemis, Doctor Harvey, Josiah Puffer, Major Rand, Captain Jackson, and Jedediah Cooper were appointed a committee to prosecute all those that were guilty of the breach of the regulation act (which prohibited the use of imported goods and superfluities generally), showing that in the country towns and among the yeomanry in those days, it was felt that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

It was in the early part of this year, 1777, that a project was devised by the English authorities to invade the country from Canada, with a view of attacking the American army under General Gates in the valley of the upper Hudson from that direction, in co-operation with forces from New York and vicinity acting on the opposite side, and so crush it out or capture it altogether. The enterprise was assigned to the charge of General Burgoyne, "a favorite of the Court of London," "animated by an extravagant love of glory," who undertook its execution with the most unwavering confidence of success. For a time no serious obstacle hindered his advance, and he thought himself to be marching easily on to victory. But sending out a detachment of men under Colonel Baum, to seize certain military stores at Bennington, it was met on the 16th of August by the gallant General Stark at the head of a brave corps of "Green Mountain boys," who, after a vigorous and desperate battle, succeeded in winning the day. The British commander was slain, one thousand stand of arms and four pieces of artillery were secured, and six hundred of the enemy were either killed or taken prisoners. The last were mostly Hessian mercenaries, bought by British gold to fight the battles of British tyranny. They were taken to Boston, put in charge of the general court, by which they were sent under parole to different localities and detained till subsequently disposed of by exchange or otherwise. A squad of them was quartered at Westminister for some months, as will be more fully noted hereafter.

When tidings of the Bennington fight reached Westminister,





a company of fifty minute men, under Capt. Elisha Jackson, started for the scene of conflict, in order to aid in repelling any fresh attack from Burgoyne's forces. After being in the service ten days, with no signs of a renewal of hostilities on the part of the enemy, they returned home.

The uninterrupted advance of Burgoyne previous to the battle at Bennington had caused great anxiety throughout the northern part of the country and cooled the ardor of many a patriotic heart, but the victory of Stark restored confidence and encouraged the people to new efforts in behalf of the cause they held so dear. A call for fresh enlistments by a resolve of the general court of Massachusetts, passed Sept. 22d, met with hearty response on every hand. Captain Jackson raised another company, in which were thirty-six Westminster men, for a month's service near the Hudson, where the British commander was waiting for some new opportunities for consummating his plans. Captain Jackson was stationed at Fishkill, and, with those under him, constituted a part of the force which compelled the surrender of the haughty, over-confident English general at an early day. As the prospects of the colonies brightened, those of the invaders grew dim, causing great discouragement and fearful apprehension in their ranks. Many deserted, and no new recruits came in. An appeal to New York for help met no response, or was so long delayed as to be of no service. All the while skirmishing was going on between detachments of the two armies, with occasional battles of importance, the advantage being largely on the side of the colonists, who were continually advancing, the foe continually retreating. Burgoyne fell back on Saratoga, with General Gates close upon his track. In despair, he asked an armistice, which was granted, and a conference between the two commanders took place. Burgoyne, looking still for re-enforcements from the south, desired to postpone hostilities for a time, but Gates, refusing to listen to such a proposition, demanded either unconditional surrender or immediate resort to battle. Burgoyne, with depleted ranks and exhausted supplies, seeing his case was hopeless, yielded to the inevitable and gave up his sword. Nearly six thousand prisoners of war were included in the capitulation, with thirty-five brass fieldpieces, five thousand muskets, and a large quantity of miscellaneous baggage and camp equipage.

The surrender of Burgoyne took place on the 17th of October, 1777, and was, undoubtedly, the turning point of the war—the event, above all others, which determined the final issue of the conflict and the destiny of the continent. It was virtually the end of hostilities at the north, all further combat taking place in the middle and southern colonies, the details of which there is no occasion for specifying in this work.

Tracing the subsequent action of the town in its relation to



the struggle for independence, in the order of time, it is to be noted that at a meeting held December 15th, it was voted to purchase one hundred and forty-four pounds of lead for the use of the soldiery, so intent were the people to be found prepared for any emergency which in the changing fortunes of war might possibly arise. During the year now drawing to a close, a large British force had remained at Newport, R. I., and vicinity, whose fleet had command of the waters in the neighborhood, and whose men in arms were ready for any service in their line which might further the interests of the common enemy. As a consequence, the people of southern New England were kept in a state of constant anxiety and fear. To allay all apprehensions on this account and to hold in check the threatening foe, as well as to meet and repel any attack that might be made by him, it was deemed necessary to issue frequent calls for men, upon both the organized militia and the people at large, in the way of volunteers for short terms of service. The town, in its corporate capacity, took no action in this special behalf, but Captains Elisha Jackson and William Edgell, either by their own free will or by appointment of the town officers or the general court, seem to have been busy in raising recruits and sending them to sections of the field in which they might be needed.

As an indication of what was done, while the conflict was going on, in aid of the cause of the country, attention is directed to numerous receipted bills for soldiers' supplies and other expenditures, preserved in the state archives at Boston, a few specimens only of which are herewith presented:—July 4, 1777, the selectmen of Westminster were allowed and paid for the mileage of seven men to Providence, and a blanket for Joseph Bailey, £10 4s.; Feb. 14, 1778, for mileage and baggage to Bennington, Vt., £50; June 13, 1778, Capt. Elisha Jackson was paid for use of pack horses for thirty-six men to Batten Kill, N. Y.; Sept. 28, 1778, the selectmen of Westminster were allowed and paid for mileage of the same men to Peekskill and Fishkill, £71 12s. 6d.; Oct. 9, 1778, Abner Bemis was paid £3 2s. for losses sustained at New York; April 23, 1779, the selectmen were paid for twenty-two shirts, fifteen pairs of shoes, twenty-five pairs of stockings, and thirty miles of transportation, £136 14s. Similar accounts appear from year to year while the war continued.

The town, meanwhile, was not unmindful of the families of its own citizens who had entered the service, nor of its obligations to befriend and help them. On the 23d of March, 1778, it

*"Voted that the Selectmen provide for Mr. Elic Keyeses wife & family and Supply them with nessecesaries as they may need."*

On the 11th of May a meeting was held especially "To Come into Sum Efectuall method to Incourage the Soldiers



Called for in the Contenanel Service and the melitia to serve att the pekeskills," etc. Upon this article it was voted that the town would "make a Grant of money to Incourage the Contenanel Soldiers to inlist into the service for Nine Months," and also voted that they would "make a Grant to Incourage the melitia to the Service mentioned in the Resolve" of the general court. The duty of employing men to enlist under these conditions was assigned to the militia officers (probably Captains Jackson and Edgell), who were to report at an adjourned meeting.

Upon the report of the officers at the subsequent meeting, it was "Voted to Raise one Hundred and Ten pounds to Seven men that may Inlist into the Contenanel Service for nine months," under certain specified conditions of payment. Then "Voted, that if any person or persons are Disposed to hire any one person into the above Service [they] may have Liberty theirown and be Considered as their Service," and also "Voted that any person may have Liberty to Hire any part of Said time and have Credit proportionably." "Voted to give the melitia men Now Called for Ten pounds per month During the Eight months called for in the Service," and "Voted that each man Receive fifteen pounds on his passing muster in part of the Sum Granted." The seven men provided for were secured and received the offered bounty as attested by still existing bills.

At a meeting on May 25th, a committee of seven persons, with Michael Gill as chairman, was appointed to equalize and adjust the sums paid for the service of those who had been engaged in the war up to that date. A month later that committee reported a list of payments to be made and bounties to be given for the several specified terms of service rendered, which was approved and adopted by the town. This list is somewhat obscure in its meaning and application, but is valuable in that it states clearly the length of time during which the different companies or corps of Westminster men had been engaged in the service, and the different localities to which they had been assigned for duty, though it does not give the number of them in any instance. As it contains some facts upon the points named which do not appear elsewhere, it is offered here as it stands in the clerk's book, the obscure portions relating to the wages and bounties being omitted:

" Apr.	1775	One week to Cambridge
	1775	Eight months to Cambridge
	1775	Six weeks to Cambridge
Jan.	1776;	12 months to Cambridge & York & Tic[onderoga].
Feb	1776;	2 months to Dorchester
June	1776;	5 months to [New] York.
July	1776;	4 months to Tic.
July	1776;	4 months to Dorchr.
Sept.	1776,	2 months to [New] York





Decr.	1776,	3 months to Danbry
Decr.	1776,	3 months to Dorchester
Mar.	1777,	1 month to Dorchester
April	1777=	2 months to Rhode Island
July	1777=	5 months to Providence
July	1777=	6 months to Springfield
July	1777=	1 month to Bennington.
August	1777=	1 week to Bennington.
Sept'r.	1777=	3 months to Bennington
Sept'r.	1777=	1 month to Stilwater
Jan.	1778	6 months to Springfield
April	1778	3 months to Boston
May	1778	9 months to Rhode Island
[No date.]		3 years Contenantel Service."

As the war progressed, the difficulty of raising men increased, and it was only by great effort that the demand in this regard could be met. The militia officers were diligent in their endeavors to obtain recruits and special inducements were held out for new enlistments. On the 8th of October, 1778, £500 were voted "to pay the thirty pounds bounty to seven men and fourteen pounds bounty to six soldiers," the amounts granted by the general court, and "two hundred pounds to pay soldiers hired by the town." A quantity of firearms having been assigned to Westminster by the legislature, to be used in defense of the liberties of the country, it was voted, Dec. 15th, that they be "sold to the Inhabitants by publick vendue," and Col. Nicholas Dike, Samuel Foster, and Maj. John Rand were made a committee to have charge of the matter. The selectmen were also directed to "Take care of those Familys whose Husbands are in the Contenantel army." At a meeting on May 19, 1779, the town

"Voted and Granted £230 to pay the nine months men agreeably to their petition and to Enable the Selectmen to Supply the Soldier's familys."

On the 24th of June, 1779, John Rand of Westminster was commissioned colonel and sent with his command to the valley of the Hudson. His staff was Moses Wheelock, *lieutenant colonel*; Benjamin Farrer, *major*; Jotham Houghton, *adjutant*; William Dunsmore, *surgeon*; Michael Gill, *quartermaster*. Among his captains were Timothy Boutelle, Leominster; Thomas Wilder, Leominster; William Edgell, Westminster; Samuel Sawin, Westminster; Thomas Cowdin, Fitchburg. Michael Gill was also adjutant in Colonel Rand's regiment. How long John Rand served as colonel in the war has not been ascertained. He was in command as late as January, 1781, which was the date of Michael Gill's appointment as quartermaster, and probably much later.

A call for men being made in the autumn of 1779, and a meeting being held Oct. 18th, by request of Captains Edgell and Jackson, "to take some Effectual and Speedy Method" of responding to it, the town "Voted that £50 for each month be given to each of the eleven Soldiers now Required [to go] into



the warr, Including the Court's Wages and Bounty as part of <sup>s</sup>d fifty pounds. Provided they Inlist Conformable to the Orders of Court of ye 9th inst. to serve for this Town." It seems that these men were secured, and the town's portion of what was to be paid them was confirmed to them at the annual meeting, March 6, 1780.

On the 5th of June of this year the general court issued fresh orders for the enlisting of men to fill up the depleted ranks of the army. In answer to the call, Westminster chose Abner Holden, John Hoar, and Nicholas Dike a committee for filling her quota, who reported July 3d that "17 men would engage for three months service for 75 bushels of Indian Corn Each," whereupon it was

*"Voted* that 75 Bushells of Indian Corn or the value thereof in Current Money Exclusive of Wages and Mileage be given to each of the 17 Soldiers who Inlist for 3 months conformable to the Order of Court of the 22<sup>d</sup> [5th] of June last payable at the Expiration of said Term," etc.

*"Voted* to advance 600 Dollars [depreciated currency] to each of the 17 Soldiers."

On the 23d of June the general court had called for three men from Westminster for six months' service, pursuant to which it was, at this same meeting, voted to "Hire the 3 men for six months in addition to the other 6 months men." The "other 6 months men" can not be definitely identified at this late date, as there is no reference to them in the town records and as no certain data respecting them have been found in the state archives.

As the Revolution went on, requisitions from time to time were made upon the different towns for various kinds of supplies for the use of the army, which sufficiently explains certain items found in the clerk's book and in the office of the state secretary at Boston. On the 4th of September, 1780, £270 were granted "for Deficiency of pay for Eighteen Blankets," and £6165 10s. "to enable the selectmen to pay for five Horses purchased for the use of the Contenantel army." The money thus paid out was subsequently reimbursed by the state, as were all similar expenditures made during the prosecution of the war.

A resolve passed by the general court Sept. 25, 1780, provided for obtaining a given amount of beef for the army, assigning a specified number of pounds to each town according to its ability to furnish it. Upon this resolve Westminster chose a committee "to purchase this Town's Quota of Beef," "who are requested to Purchase it in the most Expeditious manner," and money was granted for the payment of the same.

On the 22d of November money was granted to pay the three months' and the six months' soldiers in fulfilment of obligations assumed by previous votes of the town.

In the summer of 1781 another requisition for beef was made





by the general court, and on the 12th of July the town adopted measures for the supply of its proportional amount thereof. At the same meeting, in response to calls for three and five months' men, made June 16th and 30th, respectively, the commissioned officers were instructed to hire the men "at the best rate they can," and £350 were granted for the payment of the sums involved in this action.

Some months previous to this date, the general court had passed a resolve for raising a new quota of three years' men for the continental army, assigning twelve of the number wanted to Westminster. A few recruits seem to have been secured by private effort and the town was not called upon to act in the case till June 18, 1781, when it was asked "to Take some Effectuall and Speedy measures to obtain the Remaining part of the men Required of this town," when a novel and interesting plan was adopted for the realization of the object in hand, the wisdom of which may be somewhat questioned in view of the difficulties and annoyances to which it subsequently gave rise. After appointing a committee to enlist the men, it was at an adjourned meeting voted "that so many persons as will appear and Ingage with a Class Consisting of the one twelfth part of the Poles and Ratable Estate of this Town and percure one of the Delinquent Soldiers which this Town is called upon to Raise for three years, that said Class shall be free from all Cost or Charges that has or may arise in Porcuering the other Eleven." Under this arrangement five classes were formed, securing their five men, each class in its own way, leaving the seven remaining men to be furnished by the citizens which were unclassified, and which became a distinct portion of the town, acting independently of their fellow citizens in the matter under notice. The "7/12s," as this portion was termed, proceeded to raise their men and assumed all needful responsibility in regard to them. They held public meetings, offered bounties, granted moneys, levied taxes in order to meet their obligations, and transacted whatever business came in the line of the purpose for which they were associated. In order to carry on their operations in a legal way, they were obliged to obtain authority and power to act, by special favor of the general court, which made them a body corporate, entitled to the rights and privileges of such a body. There was much of detail and much of perplexity in their proceedings, which were brought to an end only after long delay. At a meeting held May 28, 1792, it appeared that the "7/12s." had raised in the aggregate £916 5s. 5d. 3f., and had paid out for its own legitimate purposes £915 4s. 10d. 1f., leaving a balance on hand of £1 os. 7d. 2f. A few additional demands were presented exceeding the amount on hand, for the payment of which £25 were granted, and a few months later the affairs of the "7/12s." were brought to a perpetual end.



So far as any records of the town show, and so far as can be found at the State House in Boston, the last requisition made upon Westminster for men in the Revolution was by a resolve of the legislature passed June 30, 1781, to which reference has already been made. The result of the town's action in this case was the enlistment of seven men whose names appear hereafter, under the command of Captain Sibley in Colonel Drury's regiment. Before the expiration of the five months' service, for which these recruits were engaged, the long, bitter struggle was virtually over. In fact, the end was drawing near at the time of this enrollment. The theater of hostilities had been transferred to the south—mostly beyond the Potomac. The British still held a few points at the north, but with little advantage to themselves. All active operations were elsewhere. Washington was gradually concentrating his forces in Virginia and the Carolinas, whither the enemy had gone before him, and arranging them for the final issue. Brought face to face in occasional battle, the victory, with scarce an exception, was on the American side. At last, in an unexpected moment, Cornwallis, the head of the British army in that section, found himself environed by troops greatly outnumbering his own, animated by recent successes and the hope of an early triumph for them and their cause. The only thing for him to do after a few unsuccessful attempts to extricate himself from his embarrassing and hazardous position was to capitulate and yield his command to Washington, which he did on the ever memorable 19th of October, 1781. This was virtually the closing event of the conflict. Nominal hostilities continued for nearly two years longer, and a few unimportant battles were fought, but the mother country knew that she was beaten, and finally acknowledged the independence of the colonies by signing a treaty of peace Sept. 3, 1783. Two months later the American army was disbanded and *war's bloody reign was over*.

The following items found on separate slips of paper are inserted as interesting mementoes of the Revolutionary period and the relations of Westminster thereto:

"This may certifie that I Jacob Walton Do Ingage to Doe a turn in the Continental army for Ephraim Miller of Westminster for the year 1776.

JACOB WALTON.

"December 14 y<sup>e</sup> 1775.

"left David Foster, Lt."

"WESTMINSTER Dec 11 1776.

"Then Rec<sup>d</sup> of Sam<sup>l</sup> Cook of s<sup>d</sup> Westminster five pounds for which I Isaac Miller Engage to do the Service for which s<sup>d</sup> Cook was Drafted for in the present Campeigne—S<sup>d</sup> service is one half to be alowed to s<sup>d</sup> Samuel Cook, the other half to myself.

ISAAC MILLER."

"Bostown Feb. 20 1778 Rec<sup>d</sup> of Joseph Miller of Westminster Sixty Pound for my In Listing into the Contenental army for three years for the town of Westminster.

JOSEPH GREEN."



**WESTMINSTER MEN IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR.**

In presenting a tabulated list of the names of Westminster men who were in the service of the colonies during the Revolution, it is not claimed that no mistakes occur therein, nor that no omissions exist. This is too much to hope in a case of this sort, where imperfections in the records frequently are manifest, and discrepancies found which it is impossible to reconcile or explain, and where there is often much confusion of names, dates, and other particulars of desired information. For nearly every item of the subjoined table, the author is indebted to the Revolutionary rolls and other documents at the State House, which have been scrutinized with the utmost diligence and care. The reader will notice that many of the enlistments were for short terms of service, making one or more re-enlistments possible, which accounts for the appearance of the same name at several different times, and under several different heads, in the registry below.

For convenience of reference, an alphabetical catalogue of all the Westminster soldiers, including "Minute Men" and "Enlisted Men," is appended to the principal table, which aims to give the time and place of service, under whose command, etc., in regular, chronological form and order.

**NAMES OF SOLDIERS**

Who went to Cambridge upon hearing of the battles of Lexington and Concord, April 19, 1775, for ten days' service.

**CAPTAIN ESTABROOK'S COMPANY, IN COL. ASA WHITCOMB'S REGIMENT.**

John Estabrook, capt.	David Pratt, private.	Samuel Brooks, private.
William Edgell, lieutenant.	Edward Wilson, "	Nathaniel Kezar, "
Nathan Howard, private.	Moses Seaver, "	John Cowee, "
Jabez Bigelow, "	Barron Brown, "	Josiah Wheeler, Jr., "
Jonathan Brown, "	Edward Jackson, "	Elias Stearns, "
Jedediah Cooper, "	Asa Ray, "	Nathan Pierce, "
Nathaniel Wheeler, "	Samuel Warren, "	Joshua Millens, "
David Child, "	Silas Whitney, "	Eli Keyes, "
Thomas Bemis, "	John Goodale, "	

**CAPTAIN JACKSON'S COMPANY, IN COL. ASA WHITCOMB'S REGIMENT.**

Elisha Jackson, capt.	Asa Taft, private.	Elisha Bigelow, private.
John Hoar, lieutenant.	Jonathan Child, "	Ebenezer Eaton, "
Hannaniah Rand, sergt.	James Bowers, "	Darius Sawyer, "
Joshua Everett, "	Samuel Foster, "	Paul Sawyer, "
John Glazier, "	Jonathan Bancroft, "	Reuben Miles, "
Joseph Beard, corp.	Joseph Holland, "	Joshua Bigelow, "
Isaac Williams, "	John Matthews, "	Zachariah Willis, "
Nathaniel Eaton, private.	Amos Spring, "	
John Pierce, "	Andrew Derby, "	

**CAPTAIN MILES' COMPANY, IN COL. JOHN WHITCOMB'S REGIMENT.**

Noah Miles, capt.	Wm. Bickford, sergt.	Bezaleel Holt, corp.
Samuel Sawin, lieutenant.	Josiah Puffer, "	Silas Holt, fifer.
James Clark, ensign.	Ephraim Miller, "	Levi Miles private.
Norman Seaver, sergt.	Edward Bacon, corp.	Wm. Murdock, "





Ahijah Wood,	private.	Ephraim Wetherbee, priv.	Josiah Hadley, private.
Jonathan Sawin,	"	John White,	"
Josiah Jackson,	"	Andrew Beard,	"
Nathan Lewis,	"	Joel Miles,	"
David Bemis,	"	Nathan Wood, Jr.,	"
Benjamin Barnard,	"	Lemuel Houghton,	"
Zaccheus Bemis,	"	Isaac Russell,	"
John Ball,	"	Solomon Garfield,	"
Jonathan Graves,	"	Peter Graves,	"
Samuel Whitney,	"		

The following men also went to Cambridge on the 19th of April, 1775:

Nicholas Dike, capt.	Joseph Miller, private.	Daniel Hoar, private.
John Miles, lieutenant.	Abner Holden, "	Michael Gill, "

#### MISCELLANEOUS LISTS.

At the expiration of the seven days during which the persons named above remained under pay at Cambridge, a company was recruited for eight months' service in the regular army, as stated on page 159, and put in charge of Edmund Bemis, who had been honored with a Captain's commission by the Provincial Congress. This company was in Col. John Whitcomb's regiment, and took part in the siege of Boston.

Edmund Bemis, capt.	John Snow,	private.	John Fessenden, private.
John Hoar, lieutenant.	James Bowers,	"	Peletiah Everett,
David Foster, 2d lieutenant.	John Boin [Bowen],	"	Zach <sup>h</sup> Harvey [Jr.],
Jedediah Tucker, sergt.	Samuel Child,	"	Aaron Hill,
Jacob Walton,	Isaac Child,	"	Eli Keyes,
Ephraim Hall,	Jonathan Child,	"	Reuben Miles,
Isaac Williams,	Paul Sawyer,	"	Alpheus Newton,
Abraham Stone, corp.	Israel Walton,	"	Zipron Newton,
Thomas Knower,	Edward Wilson,	"	William Parker,
Ebenezer Bolton,	Nehemiah Bowers,	"	Nathan Pierce,
Wm. Houghton,	Joseph Cavendar,	"	William Putnam,
Joel Adams, private.	Aaron Cleveland,	"	Joel Miles,
Joseph Beard,	Henry Dunster,	"	Zachariah Rand,
Barron Brown,	William Everett,	"	Samuel Seaver,
Abner Bemis,	Amos Spring,	"	Charles Reed,
Elijah Simonds,	Ahijah Wood,	"	Joseph Robbins,
Benjamin Seaver,	Zachariah Willis,	"	

Jonathan Warren Smith was in Capt. David Wilder's company, Colonel Whitcomb's regiment, 1775.

Nathan Wetherbee was in Captain Cranston's company, Colonel Whitcomb's regiment, 1775.

Zachariah Willis was in Captain Gridley's company of artillery, 1775.

John Woodward was adjutant in Captain Doolittle's regiment on Winter Hill, 1775, and Jeremiah Gager in Colonel Whitcomb's.

Barron Brown was in Captain Warner's company, Colonel Whitney's regiment, at Hull, 1776.

According to rolls in Massachusetts archives there were in the company of Capt. Manasseh Sawyer of Lancaster, Colonel Dike's regiment, enlisted September, 1776, for three months' service in the defense of Boston, or for a shorter term at a later date,

Lieut. Samuel Sawin,	Elias Farnsworth,	Thomas Farnsworth,
Benjamin Howard,	Joshua Bemis,	Samuel Merriam,
Asa Ray,	Joseph Cavendar,	Silas Holt,
Thomas Lewis,	Josiah Conant,	Elias Holden,
Stephen Holden,	Joel Miles,	David Merriam,
Stephen Miles,	Caleb Wetherbee,	Jonathan Sawin,
John Esterbrook, Jr.,	David Comee,	Joseph Holden, ensign.
Asa Savage Taylor,	Nicholas Dike, Jr.,	



Barron Brown was in Captain Warren's company, Colonel Whitney's regiment, for the same service.

As heretofore stated, Col. Nicholas Dike was stationed at Dorchester in the summer of 1776 with his regiment for the defense of Boston, then exposed to attack by British cruisers floating along the Atlantic coast on the lookout for weak points and for opportunities of hostile operations. His men were first recruited for four months' service, then were re-enlisted for three months more, and finally for one additional month, making eight months in all. At the expiration of this time, occurring March, 1777, he seems to have given up his command.

To aid in meeting the new peril which soon after arose in the invasion of Burgoyne, Captain Joslin of Leominster raised a company which left for the field of service July 31st. In it were the following Westminster men:

Asa Brooks,	Zeeb Green,	Samuel Sanderson,
John Cowee,	Joshua Mellen,	Aaron Sanderson,
Nicholas Dike, Jr.,	Stephen Miles,	David Sawin,
Thomas Furnsworth,	Samuel Miller,	Asa S. Taylor,
Jacob Goodale,	Levi Miles,	James Walker,
Jonathan Graves,	Isaac Puffer,	Samuel Wood.
Levi Graves,	Jonathan Raymond,	

At the time of the "Bennington Alarm," caused by the battle at that place, Aug. 16, 1777, the following company of "Minute Men" marched from Westminster, joining the regiment of Colonel Bridges, and were in the service ten days at East Hoosick, N. Y., in anticipation of an attack by General Burgoyne:

Elisha Jackson, capt.	Elijah Simonds, private.	Jonathan Hager, private.
Samuel Sawin, lieutenant.	Isaac Brooks, "	Josiah Headley, "
Jabez Bigelow, 2d lieutenant.	Thomas Bemis, "	Joseph Holden, "
Edward Bacon, sergt.	Ebenezer Bolton, "	Stephen Holden, "
Jonathan Sawyer, "	Levi Brooks, "	Josiah Jackson, "
Josiah Wheeler, "	Ephraim Bigelow, "	Edward Jackson, "
Stephen Calef, "	James Clark, "	Abner Miles, "
Nathan Wetherbee, corp.	David Comee, "	Joel Miles, "
Stephen Hoar, "	Jedediah Cooper, "	Nathan Miles, "
Thomas Knower, "	John Edgell, "	Noah Miles, "
Zachariah Rand, "	Samuel Foster, "	Isaac Miller, "
David Bemis, private.	Amos Gates, "	Samuel Merriam, "
Zachariah [Zaccheus?] Bemis, private.	John Glazier, "	Joseph Perry, "
	Peter Graves, "	Asa Ray, "
Joshua Bigelow, "	John Hoar, "	Abel Wood, "
Jonathan Brown, "	Jude Sawyer, "	Silas Holt, "
Reuben Sawin, "	Asa Taylor, "	Ephraim Hall, "
Nathan Wood, "		

As a reinforcement to the army under General Gates, who had succeeded General Schuyler in the valley of the Upper Hudson, the following men enlisted for twenty-seven days' service, and were stationed at Fishkill, N. Y., to aid in preventing the passage of the British forces from below northward for the purpose of co-operating with Burgoyne in his much-vaunted invasion. They remained at their post till after the surrender of the enemy on the 17th of October.

Elisha Jackson, capt.	Joshua Bigelow, private.	Josiah Hadley, private.
Samuel Sawin, lieutenant.	Levi Brooks, "	Stephen Holden, "
Jabez Bigelow, 2d lieutenant.	Joshua Bemis, "	Edward Jackson, "
Edward Bacon, sergt.	James Clark, "	Thomas Laws, "
William Bickford, "	Stephen Calf, "	Abner Miles, "
Hannaniah Rand, "	Amos Conant, "	Josiah Puffer, "
Edmund Bemis, "	Josiah Conant, "	Nathan Parmenter, "
Stephen Miles, corp.	John Cutting, "	Jonathan Raymond, "
John Edgell, "	Andrew Darby, "	Abner Sawin, "
Solomon Garfield, "	Nathan Darby, "	James Webber, "
Levi Graves, "	Samuel Fessenden, "	Nathaniel Wilson, "
Isaac Williams, "	Abel Wood, "	Samuel Wood, "





In a pay roll of one month's men, dated Dec. 28, 1777, and presented by Capt. Francis Wilson of Col. Danforth Keyes' regiment, are the names of

Norman Seaver, ensign.	Joseph Chapline,	Phineas Whitney,
Paul Walker,	Ephraim Robbins,	Joseph Seaver,

all of Westminster. Their place of service is not given; probably Rhode Island.

About the same date Nathaniel Wheeler, Samuel Gibbs, and Joseph Perry enlisted in the Continental army.

There were recruited for the "Rhode Island Service," during the year 1777, mostly in the company of Captain Sargent, Col. Josiah Whitney's regiment,

Hannaniah Rand,	Joel Miles,	Moses Seaver,
John Brooks, Jr.,	Ephraim Miles,	Phineas Whitney,
Jonathan Sawyer,	Elisha Whitney,	Nathaniel Wheeler,
Thomas Wetherbee,	Jonathan W. Smith,	Joshua Mellen.

In the company of Capt. David Henshaw, Colonel Craft's regiment, was Samuel Norcross, who served three months.

In the month of November, of the same year, Captain Jackson raised, for three years' service in the Continental army, the following men:

Peletiah Everett,	Cyprian Newton,	Amos Spring,
John Ball,	Nathaniel Woodward,	Daniel Colburn,
James Bowers,	James Osborne,	Robert Vaughn,
George Stone,	Samuel Hart,	Joseph Green, hired.
Abel Pierce,	Paul Sawyer,	Samuel Pomeroy, "
Asa Wesson,	John Snow,	Samuel Harris, "
Shadrack Newton,		

Dec. 26th Capt. William Edgell enlisted for the same service:

John Fessenden [Jr.],	William Putnam,	Dudley Bailey for 8 months.
Nathan Pierce,	Joseph Bailey,	Henry Talbot, hired.
Jonathan Child,	John Ball,	John Woodman, "
Barron Brown,	Joseph Cavendar,	John Batt, "
Eli Keyes,	Butler Whitney,	John Morson, "

At the session of the general court, held in April, 1778, a requisition was made upon Westminster for seven men to aid in making up fifteen battalions called for from the State. They were obtained by conscription, under the direction of Captain Edgell, and assigned to nine months' service at Fish-kill, N. Y. Their names were

Jeremiah Gager,	Nathan Wetherbee,	Joel Miles,
Ephraim Wetherbee,	Levi Miles,	Levi Graves.
Jonathan Raymond,		

On the 8th of October the town voted to pay these men a bounty of £30, and one of £14 to the following six men recruited by Captain Jackson:

Benjamin Treadway,	Elijah Bemis,	Stephen Bailey,
Zachariah Harvey,	Nathan Lewis,	Francis Fullam.

In Capt. Jonas Merrick's company, Colonel Sparhawk's regiment, were Jonathan Smith and Ephraim Hall, enlisted for three months' duty near Boston, till Jan. 1, 1779.

Among the nine months' men enrolled Jan. 25, 1779, were:

Joseph Perry,	Nathan Maynard,	Moses Larned,
Asa Brooks,	Joseph Seaver,	Joshua Bemis,
Samuel Wood,	Timothy Crystal,	John Brooks,

Who had a place ultimately in the company of Captain Edgell, Colonel Rand's regiment, and were stationed at Claverack, N. Y. The town voted



them £22 bounty, March 6, 1780. Jonathan Sawin and John Johnson, the latter from Fitchburg, were in the same company, the first receiving £16 14s. and the last £13 7s. bounty.

In Captain Pratt's company, raised probably for the same service, the same year, were Samuel Brooks and Abner Sawin.

In Captain Henry's company, stationed at Castle Island, Boston Harbor, were Joshua Mellen, John Bigelow, and Jonas Darby.

In the Rhode Island service during 1779 were Asa Brooks, Isaac Seaver, Phineas Slaton, Joseph Perry.

Jabez Bigelow was first and Edward Bacon second lieutenant in Captain Edgell's company, and William Bickford was second lieutenant in Capt. Samuel Sawin's company, regiment of Colonel Rand.

Among the nine months' men raised in 1780 there were credited to Westminster Josiah Bliss in the Tenth and Ebenezer Putnam in the Seventh Mass. Regts.

Pursuant to a resolve of the general court, passed June 5, 1780, there were raised for Captain Boutelle's company, Colonel Rand's regiment, the following men for three months' service:

Lieut. Jabez Bigelow,	John Cohee,	Hannaniah Whitney,
Jonadab Baker,	William Boynton,	Nathaniel Wheeler,
Asa Brooks,	Edward Wilson,	David Wyman,
Samuel Edgell,	Aaron Wood,	Ephraim Hall,
Benjamin Eaton,	Abraham Sampson,	Solomon Fessenden,
Jeremiah Gager,	Elisha Whitney,	Calvin Hale.
Ebenezer Hart,		

Only seventeen men are spoken of in the town records. Possibly two of those who enlisted did not enter the service.

In a company of 'six months' men who marched to the field of action July 6, 1780, were

Abel Pierce,	William Switcher,	Charles Hendrick,
George Stone,	Richard Everett,	Jonas Darby,
Nicholas Dike, Jr.,	Isaac Seaver,	Samuel Gibbs.
Isaac Puffer,		

Under a resolve of the general court dated Dec. 2, 1780, calling for three years' men, the following persons enlisted, the amount of bounty paid to each, as per receipt of the selectmen found in the office of the state secretary at Boston, being set against their respective names:

Silas Holt,	£120.	Jonathan Stedman,	£112.	Grant Powers,	£106.
Asa S. Taylor,	138.	Elijah Gibbs,	104.	John Atwell,	120.
Samuel Merrifield,	12.	Isaiah Taylor,	102.	Benjamin Treadway,	90.
Jonathan Harvey,	12.	Amos Kimball,	120.	Nathaniel Pattin,	120.

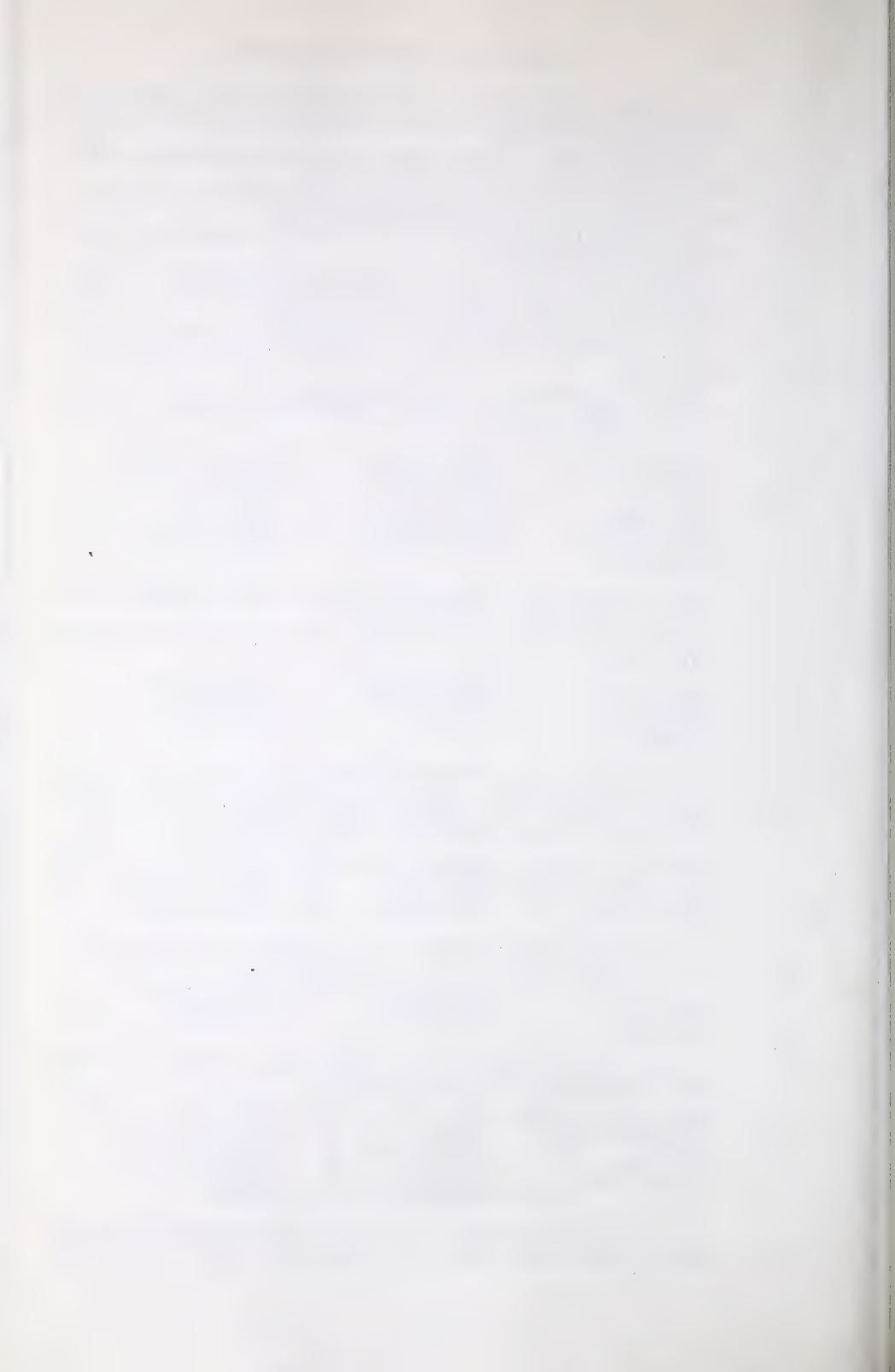
In the company of Captain Sibley, raised pursuant to act of June 30, 1781, for five months' service, the last requisition made upon the town, were

Jonadab Baker,	James Cohee,	Richard Everett,
Samuel Hoar,	George Stone,	Isaac Dupee.
John Cohee,		

In the rolls of the Continental army are the names of those who served for the period specified in months as follows:

Barron Brown,	47 mos.	Nathan Green,	36 mos.	Nathan Pierce,	37 mos.
James Bowen,	36 "	Eli Keyes,	47 "	George Stone,	36 "
John Ball,	36 "	Shadrach Newton,	36 "	Gideon Stanley,	35 "
Joseph Bailey,	16 "	Abel Pierce,	36 "	Daniel Smith,	14 "
Timothy Crystal,	12 "	Wm. Putnam,	36 "	Asa Wesson,	35 1-2 "
		Henry Talbot, or Talborst,	30 mos. (deserted).		

Mr. Hudson has, in addition to the above, Peletiah Everett, four months; Samuel Hunt, twenty months; Amos Spring, four months; and Nathaniel



Woodward, thirty-six months. Joseph Green and Jacob Walton, mentioned on a preceding page as belonging to the regular army, are not on record in the rolls, so far as found.

It is very likely that there were persons from this town in the country's service, during some part of the Revolutionary conflict, whose names do not appear in any of the consulted military lists. Indeed, some rumors or traditions to that effect have come to the compiler, but they have not seemed sufficiently well authenticated to warrant insertion here. If any really existed their number must have been very small.

# ALPHABETICAL CATALOGUE

*Of Westminster Men known to have been in the Revolution.*

## MINUTE MEN.

Adams, Joel  
Bacon, Edward  
Ball, John  
Bancroft, Jonathan  
Barnard, Benjamin  
Beard, Andrew  
Beard, Joseph  
Bemis, David  
Bemis, Edmund  
Bemis, Thomas  
Bemis, Zaccheus  
Bickford, William  
Bigelow, Elisha  
Bigelow, Ephraim  
Bigelow, Jabez  
Bigelow, Joshua  
Bolton, Aaron  
Bolton, Ebenezer  
Bowers, James  
Bowers, Nehemiah  
Brooks, Isaac  
Brooks, Levi  
Brown, Barron  
Brown, Jonathan  
Calef, Stephen  
Child, David  
Child, Isaac  
Child, Jonathan  
Childs, Samuel  
Clark, James  
Cooper, Jedediah  
Comee, David  
Cowee, John  
Darby, Andrew  
Darby, John  
Dike, Nicholas  
Dunster, Henry  
Eaton, Ebenezer  
Eaton, Nathaniel  
Edgell, John  
Edgell, William  
Estabrook, John  
Everett, Joshua  
Everett, Peletiah  
Everett, William  
Farnsworth, Thomas  
Fessenden, John

Foster, Samuel  
Garfield, Solomon  
Gates, Amos  
Gill, Michael  
Glazier, John  
Goodale, John  
Graves, Jonathan  
Graves, Levi  
Graves, Peter  
Hager, Jonathan  
Hall, Ephraim  
Hardy, Elijah  
Harvey, Zachariah  
Headley, Josiah  
Hill, Aaron  
Hoar, Daniel  
Hoar, John  
Hoar, Stephen  
Holden, Abner  
Holden, Joseph  
Holden, Stephen  
Holland, Joseph  
Holt, Barzillai  
Holt, Silas  
Horsley, William  
Houghton, Lemuel  
Houghton, William  
Howard, Nathan  
Jackson, Edward  
Jackson, Elisha  
Jackson, Josiah  
Keyes, Eli  
Kezar, Nathaniel  
Knower, Thomas  
Lewis, Nathan  
Matthews, John  
Merriam, Samuel  
Miles, Abner  
Miles, Joel  
Miles, John  
Miles, Levi  
Miles, Nathan  
Miles, Noah  
Miles, Noah, Jr.  
Miles, Reuben  
Millens, Joshua  
Miller, Ephraim

Miller, Isaac  
Miller, Joseph  
Murdock, William  
Newton, Alpheus  
Perry, Joseph  
Pierce, John  
Pierce, Nathan  
Pratt, David  
Puffer, Josiah  
Rand, Hannaniah  
Rand, Zachariah  
Ray, Asa  
Reed, Charles  
Russell, Isaac  
Sawin, Jonathan  
Sawin, Reuben  
Sawin, Samuel  
Sawyer, Darius  
Sawyer, Jonathan  
Sawyer, Jude  
Sawyer, Paul  
Seaver, Moses  
Seaver, Norman  
Sever, Samuel  
Simonds, Elijah  
Snow, John  
Spring, Amos  
Stearns, Elias  
Stone, Abram  
Taft, Asa  
Taylor, Asa  
Tucker, Jedediah  
Warren, Samuel  
Wetherbee, Ephraim  
Wetherbee, Nathan  
Wheeler, Josiah  
Wheeler, Josiah, Jr.  
Wheeler, Nathaniel  
White, John  
Whitney, Samuel  
Whitney, Silas  
Williams, Isaac  
Willis, Zachariah  
Wilson, Edward  
Wood, Abel  
Wood, Elijah  
Wood, Nathan, Jr.





## ENLISTED MEN.

Abbey, John	Everett, Richard	Newton, Alpheus
Adams, Joel	Everett, William	Newton, Shadrach
Atwell, John	Farnsworth, Elias	Newton, Zipron
Bacon, Edward	Farnsworth, Thomas	Norcross, Samuel
Baker, Jonathan	Fessenden, John,	Osborne, James
Bailey, Dudley	Fessenden, John, Jr.	Parker, William
Bailey, Joseph	Fessenden, Samuel	Parmenter, Nathan
Bailey, Stephen	Fessenden, Solomon	Pattin, Nathaniel
Ball, John	Foster, David	Perry, Joseph
Batt, John [hired]	Fullam, Francis	Pierce, Abel
Beard, Joseph	Gager, Jeremiah	Pierce, Nathan
Bemis, Abner	Garfield, Solomon	Pomeroy, Samuel [hired]
Bemis, Edmund	Gibbs, Elijah	Powers, Grant
Bemis, Edmund, Jr.	Gibbs, Samuel	Puffer, Isaac
Bemis, Elijah	Gill, Michael	Puffer, Josiah
Bemis, John	Goodale, Jacob	Putnam, Ebenezer
Bemis, Joshua	Graves, Jonathan	Putnam, William
Bickford, William	Graves, Levi	Rand, Hannaniah
Bigelow, Jabez	Green, Joseph [hired]	Rand, Zachariah
Bigelow, John	Green, Nathan	Ray, Asa
Bigelow, Joshua	Green, Zeeb	Raymond, Jonathan
Bliss, Josiah	Headley, Josiah	Reed, Charles
Boin [Bowen] John	Hale, Calvin	Robbins, Ephraim
Bolton, Ebenezer	Hall, Ephraim	Robbins, Joseph
Bowers, James	Harris, Samuel [hired]	Sampson, Abraham
Bowers, Nehemiah	Hart, Ebenezer	Sanderson, Aaron
Boynton, William	Hart, Samuel	Sanderson, Samuel
Brooks, Asa	Harvey, Jonathan	Sawin, Abner
Brooks, John, Jr.	Harvey, Zachariah	Sawin, David
Brooks, Joseph	Harvey, Zachariah, Jr.	Sawin, Jonathan
Brooks, Levi	Hendrick, Charles	Sawin, Reuben
Brooks, Samuel	Hill, Aaron	Sawin, Samuel
Brown, Barron	Hoar, John	Sawyer, Jonathan
Brown, John	Hoar, Samuel	Sawyer, Paul
Calef, Stephen	Holden, Elias	Seaver, Benjamin
Cavendar, Joseph	Holden, Joseph	Seaver, Isaac
Chaplin, Joseph	Holden, Stephen	Seaver, Joseph
Child, Isaac	Holt, Silas	Seaver, Moses
Child, Jonathan	Houghton, William	Seaver, Norman
Childs, Samuel	Howard, Benjamin	Seaver, Samuel
Clark, James	Hunt, Samuel	Simonds, Elijah
Cleveland, Aaron	Jackson, Edward	Smith, Daniel
Cohee, James	Jackson, Elisha	Smith, Jonathan
Cohee, John	Johnson, John	Smith, Jonathan W.
Colburn, Daniel	Keyes, Eli	Snow, John
Comee, David	Kimball, Amos	Spring, Amos
Conant, Amos	Knower, Thomas	Stanley, Gideon
Conant, Josiah	Larned, Moses	Stedman, Jonathan
Cutting, John	Laws, Thomas	Stone, Abram
Crystal, Timothy	Lewis, Nathan	Stone, George
Darby, Andrew	Lewis, Thomas	Switcher, William
Darby, Jonas	Maynard, Nathan	Talburst, Henry [hired]
Darby, Nathan	Merriam, David	Taylor, Asa S.
Dike, Nicholas	Merriam, Samuel	Taylor, Isaiah
Dike, Nicholas, Jr.	Merrifield, Samuel	Treadway, Benjamin
Dunster, Henry	Miles, Abner	Tucker, Jedediah
Dupee, Isaac	Miles, Ephraim	Vaughn, Robert
Dupee, John	Miles, Joel	Walker, James
Eaton, Benjamin	Miles, Levi	Walker, Paul
Edgell, John	Miles, Reuben	Walton, Israel
Edgell, Samuel	Miles, Stephen	Walton, Jacob
Edgell, William	Millens, Joshua	Webber, James
Estabrook, John, Jr.	Miller, Isaac	Wesson, Asa
Everett, Jeremiah	Miller, Samuel	Wetherbee, Caleb
Everett, Peletiah	Morson, John [hired]	Wetherbee, Ephraim



Wetherbee, Nathan	Williams, Isaac	Wood, Ahijah
Wetherbee, Thomas	Willis, Zachariah	Wood, Samuel
Wheeler, Nathaniel	Wills, John	Woodman, John [hired]
Whitney, Butler	Wilson, Edward	Woodward, John
Whitney, Elisha	Wilson, Nathaniel	Woodward, Nathaniel
Whitney, Hannaniah	Wood, Aaron	Wyman, David
Whitney, Phineas	Wood, Abel	

## PENSIONERS IN WESTMINSTER,

1840.

Dike, Joanna, widow of Nicholas Dike, Jr.  
 Drury, Eleazer, in the service before coming to Westminster.  
 Knower, Ann, widow of Thomas Knower.  
 Monroe, Ebenezer, in whose behalf, unknown.  
 Nichols, Rebecca, widow of David Nichols.  
 Sawin, Abner, in his own behalf.  
 Warren, Jeduthan, enlisted at Chelmsford.  
 Williams, Hannah, widow of Isaac.  
 Wood, Abel, in his own behalf.  
 Wood, Ahijah, in his own behalf.





## CHAPTER XI.

### GLEANINGS OF THIRTY YEARS—1770-1800.

#### RELATION TO PROVINCE, STATE, AND NATION—LOCAL AFFAIRS— FINANCIAL STANDING OF THE TOWN.

HAVING traced, with much care and detail, the actions and fortunes of Westminster in its relation to the struggle for American independence and nationality, it is in order now to turn from the more strictly martial aspect of that important period of its history, and note what was transpiring at and about the same time within its borders of a more peaceful nature,—what was no less essential to its development and prosperity as a body corporate established to promote the welfare and happiness of all classes of its population, and as a constituent factor of the state and nation whose characteristic features and ultimate destinies it has done and sacrificed so much to shape and make perpetual. We take up, therefore, in the present chapter, the thread of current events where it was dropped at the time of the completion of the act of incorporation in 1770, and follow it along the avenue of thirty years to the close of the last and the opening of the present century. The dry detail of conventional and commonplace occurrences will be, for the most part, avoided, and only the more marked events—those of general interest as well as those of local significance—will receive attention.

According to the tax lists for the year 1770, the town had, at the time of its full incorporation, one hundred and sixty-one resident and twenty non-resident tax payers, numbering in the aggregate one hundred and eighty-one, among whom there were one hundred and seventy-two polls. The same lists show that there were in the town at the same date, oxen, 158; cows, 363; horses, 80; swine, 167; sheep, 669. Only eight persons were taxed for money on hand, as follows, beginning with the highest: Nathan Whitney, Josiah Puffer, Sebez Jackson, Daniel Walker, Jonas Whitney, Edmund Bemis, John Woodward, Isaac Williams. The amounts ranged from about two hundred dollars in United States currency to seventeen and a half dollars. The eight largest real estate owners in the same order appear to have been Reuben Miles, Daniel Hoar, Joseph Miller, Nathan Whitney, Samuel Whitney, Abner Holden, Joseph Holden, John Miles. The twelve largest tax payers were John Rand, Richard Graves, Abner Holden, Nathan Whitney, Daniel Hoar,



Reuben Miles, Joseph Miller, John Miles, Elisha Bigelow, Samuel Whitney, Elisha Jackson, Noah Miles. There were three slaves in town, owned respectively by James Cohee, Daniel Hoar, and Widow Sarah Blanchard.

In those early days a careful supervision was maintained over all new-comers, partly, no doubt, for the purpose of meeting any unlawful claims that might be made, in case of need, for public support, and partly as a safeguard against immorality, vice, and crime. On the first of March, 1773, it was "Voted that the Clerk make a record of all persons that come to reside in town, the time when, and place from whence they last came." In the line of the same prudent policy was the requirement, unwritten perhaps, as it is not found in the records, that all householders receiving into their homes children or others from abroad should report the fact to the town authorities at an early date. Hence such papers as the following:

"WESTMINSTER, Dec. 25, 1766.

"This is to inform the Selectmen . . . that I have taken into my family a boy named Joel Jinkins from Groton the 18<sup>th</sup> of March last past—9 1-2 years old.

"JOHN WOODWARD."

"TO THE SELECTMEN OF WESTMINSTER:

"*Gentlemen.* This Certifies that on the Sixth day of December 1787 Mr. James Barker then of Stow in the County of Middlesex brought his daughter Susanna Barker, being then about eight years old to live with me the subscriber and she yet remains at my house.

"ELISHA BIGELOW."

**Relations to the Province and State.** Although the right of representation in the provincial legislature had been granted to the inhabitants of Westminister in the year 1770, upon their own request, yet for four years they neglected to exercise that right and were regularly fined for such neglect. But the growing difficulties with the mother country, and the continued usurpations of the royal governor, seemed to bring them to a sense of their duty in this respect, and to prompt them to active participation in public affairs. When General Gage, who had arbitrarily dissolved the general court at its regular May session in 1774, because he could not make it subservient to his oppressive designs, issued his writ for a special session to convene at Salem on the 5th of October in the same year, Dea. Nathan Wood was chosen the first Representative to that body. And though the governor recalled the order previous to the date named, with a view of preventing the assembling of a company of men whom he learned, as the elections went on, he could not intimidate and use to the furtherance of his own purpose, yet Mr. Wood was one of the immortal ninety who met at the place and time designated, and who, in the exercise of their own indefeasible rights, and



in the absence of the governor and without royal sanction, resolved themselves into a Provincial Congress for the management of public affairs on a new and independent basis, in the name and behalf of the people whom they represented. This, as heretofore indicated, was the founding of a new dynasty on these shores—the first step towards the establishing of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

This body, called the first Provincial Congress, continued its sitting at Salem but one day, when it adjourned to meet at Concord on the following Tuesday. In its session there, Abner Holden appeared as special delegate from Westminster. From that place it was removed to Cambridge, where it remained till December 10th, when it was prorogued. A second Congress came together at Cambridge on the first day of February, 1775, holding sessions there and at Concord and Watertown till May 29th, when it was dissolved. A third Congress met at Watertown on the 31st of May and continued its sessions till July 19th, at which date it gave place to a new Provincial Legislature established at the suggestion and by the authority of the General Congress of all the colonies, which had been sitting at Philadelphia since the previous September. Mr. Wood, who had been a delegate to the second and third as well as to the first Provincial Congress, was, on July 10, 1775, elected Representative to the General Assembly in the new government, which at once assumed all the prerogatives and powers, and exercised all the functions of a legislative body, subject only to the decrees of the Continental Congress, whose supremacy it recognized, and the will of the people, from whom it derived existence. So it was that the Provincial Congress, which was only provisional and temporary in its nature and character, yielded without opposition or jar to that more permanent form of administration, out of which came in due time, by a process of natural development, the constitution and government of the Commonwealth.

The great crisis in the affairs of the country had now fully come. The bond uniting the English government and its dependent colonies had been broken, never to be united more. The people everywhere were alive to the issues that had been forced upon them, and vigilant and active in behalf of their own rights and the principles of civil and religious liberty. "Straws show which way the wind blows." On May 26, 1775, the last warrant for a town meeting in Westminster was issued "In His Majesty's name." For a year, a simple notice posted at the usual places by a constable, pursuant to an order from the selectmen, summoned the voting population together for the transaction of public business. On the 13th of May, 1776, the first call was made for such a gathering "In the Name of the Government and People of the Massachusetts Bay." A new regime had been inaugurated. In less than two months from this date the "Declaration of Independence" was made to the world.





During the first years of the conflict between the colonies and the mother country, little business of a public nature was transacted in town, save what related more or less directly to the prosecution of the strife at arms—the raising of men for military service, providing for soldiers' families, furnishing supplies for troops, etc. But as time went on, other matters began to claim and to receive attention—matters pertaining not only to the then existing conditions of social and political life, but to the final adjustment of affairs and the permanent policy of the state and nation. It was deemed proper and advisable in those stirring, perilous times for constituencies to give their representatives in the General Assembly such definite and formal instructions upon questions of public concern likely to come before them for consideration and action, as they might deem conducive to the common welfare. Accordingly, at a meeting held June 12, 1777, after having elected Dea. Joseph Miller to the Legislature, a committee, consisting of Dr. Zachariah Harvey, Abner Holden, Col. Nicholas Dike, John Fosket, and Josiah Jackson, was chosen to prepare an address embodying the convictions and wishes of the citizens concerning important matters of public policy, to be presented to him for his guidance in the discharge of the duties assigned him. The committee at an adjourned meeting reported an address which was approved by the town and duly delivered to him for whom it was designed. It is too long for a full insertion here, but its several important particulars may be briefly mentioned. It directed him

1. "To Joyne with the Councile and General Assembly in forming a Constitution of Government as soone as possible.

2. "If a Motion should be made for Repealing the Act called the Regulation Act, we Direct you to oppose it vemenly. [vehemently.]

3. "We Direct you to Exert all your Influence that application may be made to Congress that all the State money may be redeemed with Continental Courency and each State charged proportionably, but not with Loan Sertificates on interest; if that cannot be obtained that then you Indever the Repeal of the late Act making the Government Courency no tender in this State.

4. "We direct you to youse your Indeaver to obtaine a Repeal of a Late act Called an act to make the Representation of this State more equail; if that cannot be obtained we Direct you to youse your utmost Indeaver that the Representation be paid out of the publick Chist.

"These things Sr with all others that may come before you we leave to your wisdom Trusting to your Uprightness and Steady attachment to the Cause you are Ingaged in and hope your Conduct will Evidence that you are a firme friend to the Liberties of your Country."

This address shows very conclusively that the Revolutionary sires in Westminster did some very earnest thinking in their day and had some very decided opinions upon public affairs, though their thoughts and opinions were not always expressed in accordance with the most approved rules of grammar and rhetoric. The same thing appears in a "Remonstrance" setting forth



"the minds of the Town with Regard to an act Newly passed by the General Assembly Calling in all the State Courency and sinking of it by Loane Sertificates on Interest," approved Nov. 25, 1777, and sent to the Legislature. It reads as follows:

"To the Honble Councile for the State of the Massachusetts Bay and Honble House of Representatives &c. The Humble petition and Remonstrance of the Inhabitants of The Town of Westminster Humbly Sheweth, That your petitioners are Greatly alarmed att the Greate Distresses to which the Contenant att Large and this State more peticulerly is brought into and still Dailey Increasing by Reason of the Extravagant Demand which is Dailey made by every Denomination of men for the articles of Commarse and Trade both forrin and Domestick. The unbounded Length to which it has already arrisen must not only be oppressive but surprising to Every beholder who is a friend to his Countrey and to what Length it will arise God only knows. Since the Barrior Not Long Since Established to prevent it is broken Down, we mean the Repeal of the Regulation Act which in our opinion would have effectually prevented it.—Your petitioners are also Greatly alarmed att an act Lately passed by the General Assembly to Call in four Hundred Thousand pounds of our State Currency and Sinking it with Loane Sertificates on Intrest payable att four and five years Distance theirby in our opinion Greately and very oppressively Increasing our burthens; Theirby Insted of Lessening only Increasing our Debts to our Greate uneasieness; Theirby Lessening our Circulateing Courency att a time when the Demand theirfor is Exceeding Greate; and that only upon a bare presumption of Increasing the Value of the Remainder of our medium of Trade; which we have Reason from past Experience to suppose will not have that Effect.—and further Calling in those bills of Creadit Emitted by this State payable att a Distant Day and afixing a fine for offering said Bills for payment of Debts, before the Expiration of Said Time is an amazing Violation of the publick faith and in our opinion Tends to bring authority into Contempt—and againe so Suddenly Calling in Said State money puts it into the power of those that have oppressed the people already by Extortionate prices to putt the same on Interest and also by Refusing to Receive any Some less than Ten pounds may be a meanes to oblige many poorer Sort of people to Loose what Little Cash They Have or putt them to Greate Difficulty,—

"We therefore your Honours petitioners Humbly move that the above Receighted Act with Every Clause and article of it may be Emeadietly Repealed and made Null and Void by the authority of this Honourable Assembly."

Early in the year 1778 a draft of a State Constitution, prepared by a committee of the Legislature appointed for the purpose and approved by that body, of which Dea. Joseph Miller was a member, was submitted to the people of the several towns for consideration and action. At a meeting of the citizens of Westminster, held May 25th and by adjournment on the eighth day of June, that instrument was discussed at much length and acted upon, the result being as the records state, "forty-nine against said Constitution and not one in favour theirot." Among the reasons given why it should not be adopted, only the principal ones can be presented here, as indicative of the spirit and convictions of the inhabitants of the town at that time:





"No Constitution whatsoever ought to be Established till preveious thei[r]to the bill of Rights be set forth and the Constitution formed theirfrom—that so the lowest Capacity may be able to Determine his Natural Rights and Judge of the aequatibleness of the Constitution theirby.

"Article 5<sup>th</sup> Deprives a part of the humane Race of their Natural Rights nearly on account of their color which in our opinion no power on Earth has a Just Right to Doe." "The Ninth article which Respects the method of chusing the Councile or Sennet appears to us to be Justly Exceptionable in as much as the greatest part of the Sennitt must be appointed without the perticular Knolidge of the Electers as to their fitness or Qualification for their high and Important office."

The nineteenth article was especially objectionable,

"Because it Deprives the people att Large of appointing their own Rulers and officers and places the power where it may and no Doubt will be greatly abused for once Establish a power in the hands of a Selected Number of Men and authorize them to establish officers over the people is a Daring Step to Depotism." "The oftener power Returns into the hands of the people the Better, and when for the good of the whole the power is Dilligated it ought to be done by the whole and no officer whatsoever from the Highest to the Lowest ought to be put in trust but by the sufferings of the people. A Neglect hear will Inevitably prove fatal to the Liberties of America." "Where can the power be loged so Safe as in the Hands of the people and who can Delligate it So well as they, or who has the boldness without Blushing to Say that the people are not Suitable to putt in their own officers—if so why do we wast our blood and Treasure to obtaine that which when obtained we are not fitt to Enjoy, or if but a Selected few only are fitt to appoint our Rulers, why were we uneasie under George. Again if the General Court must be authorized to elect all officers will they Not monopolize all places of Honour and profit to themselves to Exclusion of many others perhaps as Capeable as themselves. And further when they have made a band of officers perhaps verry Disagreeable to the people, no power is Left in the people to Disband them, saving only a long worry to obtaine an Impeachment which when obtained is brought before those verry beings who gave them Existence who always may and we bleave will have to create a Degree of mercy on the work of their own hands and Leave the people to swet under their heavie Burthens.

"The above Reasons being repetedly Read to the Town, Voted to Except [accept] thereof and ordered to be sent to our Representative."

The Constitution, thus criticised and condemned, did not receive the sanction of the citizens of the state, and a year later a call was issued by authority of the Legislature, and in accordance with the voice of the people at large upon the subject (although Westminster voted 47 to 1 against the proposition), for a Constitutional Convention to be held in Cambridge on the first day of September, following. To this Convention, Abner Holden was sent as delegate. After many sittings, continuing at intervals through the fall and winter, a form of Constitution was adopted by the convention, printed and sent out to the towns for their verdict upon it.

At a meeting of the voters of Westminster held May 13, 1780, a committee was chosen, with Lieut. Samuel Gerrish chairman, to consider and make report upon this proposed basis of a permanent state government. The committee sub-



mitted the result of their deliberations on the 26th of the same month in the form herewith presented, to wit :

"The Report of the Committee as follows viz:— That the Constitution of Government proposed be acceptable making only the following alterations therein,—

"In the 12<sup>th</sup> Article, Immediately after the words, by himself, be added 'or any other person or Persons he shall appoint whether he or they so appointed be sworn attorneys or not.'

"In ye 20<sup>th</sup> Art. provision is made for the Judges of the Supreme Court to have honorable Salaries ascertained and Established by Standing Laws in the Room of which we think it ought to be granted by the Legislature annually.

"In ye 3<sup>d</sup> art. after the words other Courts be added 'such as have been used or Practised in this State.'

"In the 1<sup>st</sup> Art. Section 2<sup>d</sup>., we are are of opinion therein ought to be no Council & that the Number of Senators be Reduced to 31. We apprehend a Number of Senators may be as proper for advising the Governor as a Council may be.

"In the 3<sup>d</sup> Section upon Representation in the 2<sup>d</sup> Art. we Judge an alteration is Necessary and in particular with Regard to the Increasing Number of Voters to Send a Second Representative in a town, we Conceive that 500 Rateable poles ought at least to be the mean Increasing Number to send a Second Representative in any Town. We Judge also that from the Time that this Constitution shall take place [all towns] which may be Incorporated and taxed to the Charge of Government ought to be allowed to send one Representative, Let their Numbers be more or less, Observing the above Rule for an additional Representative.

"Accepted the Eleventh Art. only that Part that Respects a Privey Council.

"In the Eighth Art. we are of opinion that the power of Pardoning should lie with the Govnr and Sennate.

"In the Ninth Art. we are of opinion that the House of Representatives ought in the Room of the Governor to make the nomination of all Civill and Judicial Officers and to be Complied with or Rejected by the Governor and Sennate and Commissioned by them.

"In the 13<sup>th</sup> Art. we are of opinion that the Governor and Supream Judges Sallerys should be annually granted by the Legislature as the particular Exegyency of the Times may Require.

"Section 3<sup>d</sup> Chap. 2<sup>d</sup> Voted to Expunge the whole of this Section."

This report, with its several recommendations, was accepted and adopted by the town by a vote of 30 to 5, the latter being in favor of the form presented without alteration. It was also voted that the instrument ought to be revised in seven years after it should be put in operation.

This Constitution received the sanction of the people and became by formal official proclamation the fundamental law of the state, the last Wednesday of October being assigned as the date when it should go into effect by the organization of the government for the establishment of which it made all needful provision. The election of the principal required officers was ordered to take place in September, and that of representatives in October, ten days at least before the date specified.

At a meeting held Sept. 4, 1780, the legal voters of Westminster cast their first ballot for Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, and Senators under the Constitution. The result was,



*For Governor*—John Hancock, 52; James Bowdoin, 5.

*For Lieutenant-Governor*—James Bowdoin, 43; John Hancock, 2.

*For Senators*—Judge Baker, 25; Edward Davis, 20; Judge Dorr, 16; Colonel Clapp, 11; Esq. Rawson, 9; Joseph Wheeler, 9; William Dinsmore, 8; Abner Holden, 7; Col. Asa Whitcomb, 6; Judge Michael Gill, 5; Major Washburn, 5; Seth Reed, 2.

Of these candidates, John Hancock was elected Governor by popular vote. James Bowdoin, failing of an election by the people, was appointed Lieutenant-Governor, but declined the office, which was subsequently filled by Thomas Cushing. Of the candidates for Senators voted for, Baker, Dorr, Gill, and Washburn were elected, and also Israel Nichols of Leominster, who appears to have received no votes here. The first Representative to the Legislature under the State Constitution was Abner Holden, elected Oct. 12, 1780, for the session beginning the 25th of the same month. He was undoubtedly present at the inauguration of John Hancock, the first Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and participated in the ceremonies with which a constitutional government within its borders was originally established.

Other items of interest and importance illustrating the relation of Westminister to the sovereign state, of which it is a constituent part, will be given in their proper place and connection hereafter.

**Relations to the Nation.** The general interest taken by the people of this town in the cause of the united colonies of Great Britain in North America, and their readiness to maintain the rights and stand fast by the principles of freedom which those colonies jointly represented and proclaimed to the world, have been sufficiently set forth in preceding chapters of this work. It is only needful at this point to refer briefly to the part they took in the initiation or adoption of those measures which were calculated to bind the different parts of the country more firmly together for the successful prosecution of the conflict with the crown and court of England, wherein all were alike involved, and which rose to their destined consummation in the adoption and establishment, as the supreme law of the land, of the Federal Constitution in 1787. No sooner had the colonies absolved themselves from all allegiance to Great Britain and declared themselves free and independent, than the wiser of their citizens began to see and feel the necessity of some bond of union that should hold them to a common purpose and inspire confidence on the part of the people looking for some recognized and properly constituted authority to guide them through the fearful crisis that had befallen them. The Continental Congress, which had been created by the exigencies of the times, seemed to command respect from the





beginning, and when it proposed a plan of confederation soon after the last links of loyalty to the mother country had been broken, general satisfaction thereat was manifested on every hand. Great difficulties were encountered, however, in arranging the details of the plan, and it was not for more than a year, or until the autumn of 1777, that it was deemed sufficiently mature to warrant the submission of it to the different states for ratification. The Legislature of Massachusetts, before taking final action upon it, consulted the judgment of the people at large, through instructions given by the different towns to their respective representatives. Westminster expressed the feelings and convictions of its leading citizens upon the important matter in an address to Dea. Joseph Miller, member of the General Court from the town, as follows:

"*Sir*, you being Representative for this town, our Instructions to you are that Having considered the articles of Confederation for perpetual Union Government and Happyness of the Thirteen United States of America which we conceive as admirably well adapted to the various Circumstances of the Several States and as containing such Laws, Rules and Regulations for the Government Thereof as Justly call for our approbation and Consent, That you in Behalf of this Town in the General Assembly Do approve of and consent to The Articles of Confederation as proposed by the Honorable Contentental Congress and youse your Indever that it be Instructed to our Delegates att the Contententall Congress that the Said Confederation be by them authentecated in order to our establishing perpetual Union and Government with the thirteen United States of America, which Union we apprehend to be Escenceally Nessecesarry to the Support of that freedom we have hitherto Supported att the Loss of so much Treasure and Blood wherein our enemies have so frequently been defeated and Driven back from greate exertions when from their Diabolical Designes as Exhibited in some Instances we could Expect no other than Dessolation and Disstress."

The articles in question were ratified by a majority of the states and became the acknowledged law of the land. They served, as a Provisional Government, the country's needs for a time, but were found by experience to be "imperfect in detail and inadequate to the wants of a growing republic." The necessity of a more perfect bond of union and of a form of government clothed with larger and more authoritative powers, became evident to the wiser patriots of the country at an early day, and the rise of certain exigencies for which the "Articles of Confederation" proved wholly insufficient, tended to produce the same conviction in the minds of the people at large. The first public utterance, looking to a remedy for existing defects, came from James Bowdoin, Governor of Massachusetts, who, in his message to the General Court in May, 1785, recommended the appointment of delegates from the several states "to settle and define the powers of the National Congress," which was the acknowledged supreme authority in the land. Nearly two years transpired, however, before the proposition assumed a definite and practical shape. Early in 1787 a convention was called by act of Congress to meet in the May following, for the



purpose of reconstructing the whole prevailing system of government. Commissioners from all the states except Rhode Island were appointed pursuant thereto, convening at Philadelphia at the date designated. They organized by choosing Washington to preside over their deliberations. After a session of four months, a Constitution was framed, which was afterwards adopted by Congress and sent to the different states for ratification. A convention in Massachusetts, called for the purpose of acting upon the matter, met at Boston, Jan. 9, 1788. To this convention Mr. Stephen Holden was elected delegate from Westminster at a meeting held Nov. 30, 1787, after which it was voted "not to give him any instructions, but to allow him full liberty to act upon his own discretion and judgment." At the end of a month, during which its several provisions were thoroughly discussed *pro* and *con*, the submitted form of government was approved by the small majority of 19 votes; 187 members being registered in the affirmative, and 168 in the negative. Mr. Holden's name is found among the latter, and Westminster is accredited with the honor or dishonor of being at the outset opposed to the Constitution. In the spirit of true loyalty, however, the town yielded gracefully to the decision of the majority, fell at once into line, and has kept step to the music of the Federal Union through all the subsequent years of the nation's history.

The new Constitution, having been ratified by the required number of states during the ensuing summer, was formally declared to be adopted by the General Congress on the 13th of September, and the first Wednesday of the following January, 1789, was fixed upon as the day for choosing Electors of President and Vice-President, and other required officers of the new government, which was to go into operation on Wednesday, the fourth day of March.

For some unexplained reason the citizens of Westminster anticipated the date specified by Congress for the election just mentioned, and held a meeting on the 18th of December, at which votes were variously cast for Presidential Electors, as follows: Amos Singletary, 5; Joseph Davis, 2; Timothy Fuller, 2; John Fessenden, 5; Nahum Willard, 1; Jonathan Grout, 4; Timothy Paine, 2; Judge Baker, 6; Judge Ward, 7; Judge Gill, 9; Seth Washburn, 15; Abel Wilder, 20. The ballot for Representative to Congress resulted in giving Colonel Grout 2 votes; Timothy Paine, 1; Seth Washburn, 2; Judge Gill, 7; Timothy Fuller, 5; Joseph Davis, 10; Judge Ward, 26. Of the several candidates for Electors above named, only Judge Moses Gill was chosen, and there was no choice of a Congressional Representative. A second election took place January 29th, at which Timothy Paine received 37 votes; Jonathan Grout, 14; Artemas Ward, 3. Still was there no choice. At a third trial, on the 2d of March, the same candidates had 44, 30,





and 2 votes, respectively. The second of these, Jonathan Grout of Petersham, had a majority of votes in the county, and was accordingly elected.

On one other occasion only, during the period now under review, did the citizens of Westminster feel called upon to express themselves by public vote upon national affairs. It was with respect to a treaty between the United States and Great Britain, concluded through the agency of the eminent John Jay, who had been duly commissioned for the purpose, Nov. 19, 1794, ratified in its essential features by the United States Senate, June 24, 1795, and on Aug. 18th, formally approved by the President. Though not in all regards what the latter desired, he yet deemed it good policy to affix to it his signature, and thus make it obligatory upon the nation. This act of diplomacy met with great opposition in many quarters. The terms of agreement specified in it were denounced as a pusillanimous concession to British arrogance, injurious to the interests of the United States, and derogatory to the national honor. Washington was severely criticized, Jay was hung in effigy, and riots broke out in some localities among the ruder elements of society, as tokens of hostility to the measure. Boston shared largely in the feeling thus expressed. Meetings were held and inflammatory speeches made in the interest of the opposition. The towns were appealed to for sympathy and support in the course pursued. Little comfort, however, did the disaffected derive from Westminster. Instead of lending fuel to the flames of discontent and antagonism, its citizens stood firmly by the action of the government, and, at a meeting held May 3, 1796,

"Voted unanimously that this town will prefer a Memorial to the Honorable the House of Representatives of the United States praying that provision be made to carry into full effect the Treaty lately made with Great Britain by the constituted authorities."

The memorial was drawn accordingly, approved and "signed by 223 of the inhabitants," and voted to be forwarded to Hon. Dwight Foster, Representative to the lower house of Congress, for presentation in due form to that august body. The treaty, notwithstanding all opposition to it, was finally approved by a majority of the people, as it was by the National Legislature; the necessary laws were passed for carrying its provisions into effect, and, spite of all fears and prophecies of evil, proved a blessing to the country and its inhabitants.

**Currency and Trade.** The annoyances and difficulties growing out of the disturbed state of the currency, the tendency to create class distinctions based on financial considerations, and other conditions of individual and social life resulting from human pride and selfishness, to which allusion has heretofore been made, rather increased than diminished with the progress of the war. The different legislative bodies of the state



and nation took note of them and passed, as occasion seemed to require, acts and resolves designed to remove, or at least palliate, them; and carry relief, as far as possible, to the burdened and tired people. When such proceedings required special responsive action on the part of towns, Westminster appears to have been ready and willing to take it. An enactment of the General Assembly for the prevention of monopoly and oppression, and called "the Monopoly Act," placed upon the statute books in 1779, was followed by the appointment of a committee on the part of the citizens in public meeting assembled, consisting of Capt. Edmund Bemis, Samuel Whitney, Jr., Dr. Israel Green, Asa Ray, and Timothy Damon, to see that its provisions were carried into effect.

About the same time the Continental Congress issued an address to the country upon "the Appreciation of the Currency" and kindred matters. The citizens of Boston, in response to that address, recommended the holding of popular conventions, composed of delegates legally chosen by the different towns of the State, for the purpose of taking the whole subject involved into deliberate consideration, and of establishing, as a practical result, a schedule of prices for staple articles of merchandise and country produce, to be duly regarded by all classes of the community. Pursuant to that recommendation, such a convention was called to meet at Concord, July 14, 1779. To that convention the voters of Westminster, after expressing their desire to concur "with every Salutory measure for appreciating our Currency," and their approval of the address of Congress and of the suggestions of the town of Boston, sent, as a delegate, Capt. Noah Miles, with the following instructions:

"1<sup>st</sup>. That you use your Endeavor as much as possible that the produce of the country and merchandize bare as equal proportion in price, the one to the other as the Nature of them will admit of.

"2<sup>d</sup>. That you use your Utmost Endeavor that there be no further Rise of any of the Produce of the Country.

"3<sup>d</sup>. That you use your Endeavor that the farmers produce fall in Just proportion with Merchandize and so continue to fall in price, the farmer and Merchant in Just proportion till they come down as Low as the Circumstances of [the] times will admit of."

The convention met as provided, and prepared a partial list of prices of merchandise and farm products, which was approved by the town at a meeting held two weeks afterward, reserving the privilege of fixing prices at their own discretion to be observed within its own borders.

A second convention of a similar character was held at the same place Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, to which Capt. William Edgell was chosen delegate for the town. Its purpose was to review the price list previously adopted, adjust some of its discrepancies, increase the number of articles it contained, and make it more complete and equitable in all possible respects. Captain Edgell was directed



to "use his endeavor that the price of Beef, Lamb, Mutton, and Veal, be stated alike—that the price of Indian Corn, Rye, and Wheat be brought to an equal proportion with Veal, Mutton, Lamb, and other country produce, and that the price of West India and N. E. Rum, Molasses and Salt, which we judge to be stated higher in proportion than the other articles we have Excepted against, be brought down to a price nearer in proportion with the produce of the Country in General, admitting a proper allowance on the Extraordinary Risque of Importation." "We also advise that Refined Iron and many other articles of Commerce not before Stated, may be Stated in just proportion with other articles."

No report of the proceedings of this convention has come to hand, and no action of the town was taken thereon. Moreover, no copy of the price list of either of the Concord conventions has been found. There is, however, a table of prices established by the town itself about that time, a few items of which are herewith presented:

"Men's Labour in Husbandry, . . . .	£2.	0.	0.	per day.
Boarding a man per week, . . . .	4.	10.	0.	
A day's worke of oxen, . . . .	1.	7.	0.	
Horse rent per mile, . . . .	0.	3.	0.	
For keeping a Yoake of oxen, . . . .	2.	0.	0.	
Keeping a horse a week, . . . .	1.	8.	0.	
Carpenter's & Joiners work per day, . . . .	2.	18.	0.	
Cooper's Work a Cyder Barrell, . . . .	4.	0.	0.	
"    "    good pales, . . . .	1.	7.	0.	
Mason's Worke per day, . . . .	3.	3.	0.	
Bricks of the best quality, . . . .	15.	0.	0.	per thousand.
Potatoes, . . . .	18.	0.	0.	" bushel.
Turnips, . . . .	12.	0.	0.	" "
Good Peas, . . . .	8.	0.	0.	" "
Beens, . . . .	5.	0.	0.	" "
Apples for winter, . . . .	18.	0.	0.	" "
Good Shingles a Bunch, . . . .	6.	10.	0.	
Common Boards for Inclosing, . . . .	18.	0.	0.	per thousand.
Sawing a Thousand of Boards, . . . .	8.	0.	0.	
Side Clapboards, . . . .	5.	0.	0.	per hundred.
Live Shoats, . . . .	4.	6.	0.	per pound.
Tobacco, . . . .	7.	0.	0.	per pound."

**Shay's Rebellion.** Scarcely had the thunders of the Revolution ceased and the confused noise of battle become silenced in the land, before there sprang up in different localities a feeling of discontent and a commotion of impassioned elements which created wide-spread apprehension and alarm, and at times threatened serious consequences to the body politic and the general welfare. The State of Massachusetts was not exempt from these unhappy disturbances which culminated at length in what is known in history as "Shay's Rebellion." This episode in the affairs of the Commonwealth, which, beginning in a small and inoffensive way, assumed at length the form of armed resist-





ance to the established government, though it was fortunately brought to an end before it had wrought great mischief, by the wisdom, calmness, and decision of the Executive, Governor Bowdoin, and the steadfast co-operation of the friends of law and order, shows that in times of popular excitement "reason is often dethroned and the highly exasperated passions of the multitude overleap the barriers of outward restraint and riot in suicidal and hideous excesses."

The causes of the outbreak it is not difficult to determine. The long war with the mother country had greatly impoverished the people, who, in their best estate, were illy prepared to bear the burdens which the circumstances of their lot imposed upon them. The government was heavily in debt, necessitating high taxation, and a much depreciated currency reduced the ability to meet the collector's demands and other justly incurred obligations, and even to command the necessities of life. Moreover, creditors and other claimants were often not only persistent but exasperating and inhuman in their efforts to obtain their dues, resorting to legal processes and other methods, involving additional and needless expense and provoking animosity and ill-will. These things made the lot of the masses extremely hard, and were well calculated to foster discontent and a restless anxiety for relief. Besides, there were then, as in later times, a set of uneasy spirits or self-seeking demagogues in the community, ready to play upon the excited feelings of the multitude, to magnify grievances, and, in order to serve their own unhallowed ambition, to feed dissatisfaction into frenzy and open violence. It is said, furthermore, that the enemies of American liberty and independence exerted their influence to intensify the existing disquietude for the sake of working all possible mischief to the country and proving that separation from England was a mistake fraught with inevitable peril and disaster.

It is not in the line of the purpose of this work to detail the rise, progress, fatal consummation, and final collapse of this foolish, irrational, reckless, every way unfortunate affair, nor to follow its unscrupulous, hot-headed promoters and leaders into voluntary exile and merited disgrace. For information of this nature the reader is referred to the fuller annals of the period when it took place. What concerns the present writing is the relation of the town of Westminster to this treasonable uprising—the consideration of how far its citizens were implicated in it, and what public action was taken in regard to it.

No doubt there were a considerable number of persons at the outset, who, recognizing and experiencing the burdens and grievances to which allusion has been made, were inclined to lend the movement, that in the beginning proposed simply to secure relief therefrom, sympathy and support. This feeling found expression as early as 1784, two years before the general unrest and disaffection assumed its final form of an organized



effort to secure certain definitely proposed ends, when at a town meeting, held April 17th, the citizens were called upon to decide "whether they will Joine with other Towns of this County and Send a member or members to a County Convention to be held att Worcester on Tuesday the 20th inst. to consult wise measures for the Redress of our grievances and that in a Constitutional way," and when John Brooks was chosen to represent them on the occasion specified. The result of the deliberations of this body was the drafting a petition setting forth the principal disabilities under which the people suffered, and asking relief, to be presented to the General Court by the several towns represented therein. At a meeting held on the 13th of May following, the petition, which appears in full in the records of the clerk, was approved by the vote of the citizens, and no doubt forwarded to the Legislature.

Whatever that body may have done in answer to this and similar petitions, the desired relief was not realized. Hence, in the summer of 1786, there came together informally a few of the disaffected in the more southerly part of Worcester County, who organized as a county convention, and caused circular letters to be issued to the selectmen of the towns, asking that delegates be chosen to attend a second convention, to be held at Leicester on the 15th of August. A meeting of the citizens of Westminster was called the day before for the purpose of taking action upon that request. The movement assumed a very inoffensive form at that time, disclosing nothing of the "death's head and cross bones," which afterwards characterized it, as the article relating thereto in the warrant for the meeting named clearly shows. That article was "To Hear a Circular Letter, &c. and to appoint a Committee to meet in Convention to take into consideration the greivences the County Labour under and give Said Committee such Instructions as shall be judged proper." Pursuant thereto it was voted "to send to the Convention," and Lieut. Nathan Howard was chosen for the service. No instructions were given him.

Mr. Howard made no formal report to the town of the proceedings of that convention, but it appears from contemporaneous history that the delegates after voting themselves to be "a lawful body assembled in a constitutional way," proceeded to enumerate for public proclamation the primal causes of the prevailing discontent and grounds of complaint. They were eight in number, and of sufficient moment to call for and justify some definite and decisive action on the part of those present. An address or petition to the Legislature, similar to the one previously referred to, in which they were distinctly stated, was prepared, and as before submitted to the towns for approval or rejection as might be deemed best. Westminster refused to adopt it by a tie vote, and declined being represented any further in the con-





vention, which seems to have adjourned to some subsequent date.

And so ended the active relation of the town to the rebellion of 1786. It is quite probable that the more thoughtful and loyal of its inhabitants, seeing that there was likely to be trouble ahead—that the agitation had, in the purpose of its ruling spirits, a treasonable meaning and would probably lead on to much mischief and confusion, if not to violence and open war—deemed it wise and right as men and as patriots to withdraw from all participation in it whatsoever. And it is also quite likely, although, as indicated by the vote just mentioned, about half of the citizens were still in sympathy with the agitators, that when it became apparent what the end was to be, and to what issues of blood and death the current of things was tending, the better judgment of the people at large pronounced against the movement and withdrew from it their countenance and support. For it does not appear that more than one or two inhabitants of the place ever joined the rebellion or engaged in any enterprise which openly contemplated armed resistance to and the overthrow of the constitutionally established authority of the state and nation. While neighboring towns became more or less deeply involved in the treasonable uprising, yet the people of Westminster were loyal and true, in no wise disposed to undervalue or jeopardize the blessings which they and the country had gained at immense sacrifice, but willing to endure patiently and hopefully the burdens and privations of their lot, in the faith that He in whom they believed and by whose kind providence they had been brought thus far on their way, would not leave nor forsake them, but in due time visit them with fresh tokens of His overshadowing presence and deliver them out of all their troubles.

At the same time they were inclined to look upon those more seditiously disposed with an indulgent eye, and, instead of clamoring for vigorous and severe measures on the part of the government towards them, besought in their behalf kindly consideration and charitable judgment. As the revolt grew in size, in audacity, and virulence, it was deemed necessary by the magistracy of the state to cause its more persistent and sanguinary adherents to be apprehended and put under proper restraint, as a preventive policy calculated to temper the rashness of others and preclude the possibility of impending fatality and death. In view of which, and to insure, if possible, clemency and charity, the citizens of Westminster at a meeting held Jan. 4, 1787, preferred a petition to the General Court substantially to the following effect:

“That whereas their is a Tumultuous uprising of the people in various parts of the Commonwealth, Especially in the upper Counties, obstructing the sitting of the Courts and causing disorders to prevail to that Degree that in the same Neighborhood, hand and tongue are set against each other,



which greatly threatens us with Civil war, and that it appears their is such a Spirit of resentment ocationed from fear or falosy or threats of apprehension whereby there can be no friendly correspondence together, wherefore your petitioners pray that your Honours would be pleased to grant all those people called Regulators [or rebels] the favor of the Act of Indemnity on account of their late Rising and Stopping of the Courts so that their persons and property may be Secured from any molestation if consistent with the Honor and Dignity of the government. And furthermore your petitioners are induced by tender feelings of Humanity to pray if consistent with your Wisdom that you use your Influence with the Hon. Supreme Executive body [the governor and council] that they release all those unhappy men taken by government and confined in any of the jails of the Commonwealth in consequence of the late uprising so that being Liberated we may associate once more together and Inculcate in the minds of each other the necessity of peace and good order for the Safety and well-being of the community &c. And as the minds of the people in some parts of the State are very much set against the Courts by reason of there not being so good economy in them as might be, your petitioners are induced by a Discovery of why it is that the minds of the people are so soured with the proceedings of those Courts [to] humbly pray, if consistent with your wisdom that there may be a suspension of them till after the next election of Members of the Honorable and General Court. Your petitioners wait for a gracious answer."

This petition was prepared before any outbreak had taken place or any blood had been shed. But the malcontents were arming themselves and putting on the appearance of open war.

The threatening aspects of affairs caused the Governor to issue an order for the raising of four thousand, four hundred troops and four regiments of artillery, and the war-cry was sounding through the air. The insurrection was hurrying on to its culmination. On the 25th of January the rebels, twelve hundred in number, under Captain Shays, the chief malcontent, made an assault upon the arsenal at Springfield, and were repulsed by the government troops under General Shepard, four of their men being slain; whereupon they fled in utter confusion and discomfiture, and the rebellion was ended. Two weeks later, just as the blustering leaders of the insurgents were safely ensconced in New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York, beyond the reach of Massachusetts' magistrates and soldiery, Westminster voted to instruct its Representative in the General Court, Abner Holden, in the matter under notice, as follows:

"As our army is in the field the sword is drawn and those that defy the government, if they do not desist must feel the weight of that power which hath been despised and opposed, in pity to those that have been misled in taking up arms against the government, we instruct you to use your endeavors to have an 'Act of Indemnity' again extended to them, provided they will lay down their arms, take the oath of allegiance and become good subjects; as to the leaders of such, we instruct you to use your influence to have as much compassion shown them as can be consistent with the honor and dignity of the government, which we ever wish a due regard should be paid unto. As to any further grievances still subsisting your opportunity of knowing the complaints of the people are such that you cannot be ignorant of them and your attention will therefore be given to every just complaint though it is not our expectation that all of these can be at once redressed; and we cannot omit expressing here our acknowledgement to



the Court in listening at its last session to the general complaints of the people and saying that if their doings had had proper weight on the public mind no further disturbances would have arisen."

This document, as well as others quoted, is an added proof of the clear-sightedness, decision, loyalty, and forbearance of our sires in one of the most trying and difficult times in the history of the state, and reflects lasting honor upon both the head and heart of those whose convictions, feelings, and desires it was designed to express.

A few Westminster men, it is understood, responded to the call of the state government for soldiers to aid in suppressing the ill-advised and unjustifiable revolt, and enlisted in the thirty days' service provided for therein, but their names, with the exception of that of William Edgell, 2d, have not been ascertained. Before the time of enlistment had expired, the belligerent episode had come to an ignominious end.

**The Hessian Prisoners.** After the battle of Bennington, Aug. 16, 1777, mentioned on page 164, the captured officers and privates were sent to the neighborhood of Boston for safe keeping, being put in charge of the Legislature of Massachusetts and made subject to its disposal. They were divided into small companies and distributed under parole to different localities among the inland towns. One of these companies, consisting of fifteen Brunswick and Hessian officers with their servants, thirty-one persons in all, was by order of the General Court sent to Westminster, as the following communication addressed to the selectmen shows:

"Sept. 9, 1777. Gent<sup>n</sup>. You have herewith the Parol of sundry Officers lately taken at or near Bennington which the Council have assigned to your care to remain in such parts of your town as you shall assign them. You will have a particular eye to their conduct and in case they in any way or manner break their Parol you will make an immediate report thereof to the Council."

These men were probably taken in charge by the town authorities, though there is nothing in the general records relating to them, and were placed in the families of Joshua Everett, Stephen Sawin, Daniel Walker, Nathan Whitney, and perhaps elsewhere. Within the memory of the writer, some mementoes of their residence here in the form of autographs or other inscriptions in the German language were to be seen upon the walls of the dwellings where they boarded—which are still standing—but probably ere this are wholly obliterated or hidden from view.

How long these persons remained in town is not known, nor whither they went. It is supposed they were exchanged for prisoners taken by the British the following year at some of the battles near the city of New York. It is proper to state that one of them, probably a servant of Captain Freike named below, Abraham Scholt, was pleased to take up his abode in the vicini-





ity, marrying and settling in Petersham, where he lived to be, as is claimed, 105 years of age. His daughter, Marrie, married for a second husband Abner M. Drury of Westminster, and had three children, of whom A. Evander Drury of Harrisville, N. H., is the only survivor.

The following is a list of the officers under notice, with their rank respectively, and the number of their servants, among whom there was one woman :

De Meibon, Major of Dragoons . . . . .	3 servants.
Freike, Captain of Dragoons . . . . .	1 "
Schlagenteuffel, Lieutenant of Dragoons . . . . .	1 "
De Reckrodt, Lieutenant of Dragoons . . . . .	1 "
De Bolkman, Lieutenant of Dragoons . . . . .	2 "
Schoneweldt, Cornet of Dragoons . . . . .	1 "
Thomas, Auditeur of Dragoons, . . . . .	1 "
Vorbundt, Surgeon of Dragoons . . . . .	
De Bartling, Captain of Dragoons . . . . .	1 "
Burzhoff, Lieutenant of Dragoons . . . . .	1 "
Mayer, Lieutenant of Dragoons . . . . .	
Dommes, Captain of Light Infantry . . . . .	1 "
Fahndr Specht, Captain of Light Infantry . . . . .	1 "
Andrae, Ensign of Light Infantry . . . . .	1 "
Bach, Lieutenant of Artillery . . . . .	1 "

**Town of Gardner.** The first movement having in view the excision of a portion of the original territory of Westminster, arose as early as the year 1774, when an article appeared in the warrant calling a meeting of its citizens on the 16th of May, as follows :

"To hear the petition of a Number of Inhabitants in the Westerly part of the Town To Know whether they will Vote off the Westerly part of the Town as a precinct or Destrict."

At that date there were scarcely more than a dozen families so located as to be in any wise benefited by the proposition, and it was very properly "Voted not to act on this Article."

At a meeting held May 9, 1785, eleven years afterwards, a similar proposition came up for consideration. The town at first voted adversely to it, but referred it to a committee consisting of Elisha Bigelow, Elisha Jackson, Abner Holden, Seth Heywood, John Miles, and Nicholas Dike, who looked the matter over, viewing the line of division asked for, etc., and at an adjourned meeting, held May 17th, reported in its favor. The report was accepted and it was

"Voted to sett of the westerly part of the Town beginning att the South-Easterly Corner of Lott No. 32 third Division on Huburdston Line then Runing North-Easterly to the South-westerly Corner of Lott No. 91 Second Division from thence on the Line between Lotts No. 91 & 92 to the Town Line."

Corresponding action having been taken by the citizens of Ashburnham, Winchendon, and Templeton, upon request of parties interested, the General Court, in answer to a petition to



that effect, passed an "Act of Incorporation" for the town of Gardner on the 27th of the month following, June, 1785. It may be observed that the division line between Westminster and Gardner, indicated above, was, by the consent of the Legislature, so far modified in the final adjustment as to allow each real estate owner, whose farm it divided, to have his lands assigned to whichever town he might elect. This accounts for that irregular, jagged boundary now existing between the two towns, which is the wonder of uninformed observers and the plague of surveyors. If Westminster ever regretted its action in this matter, it has had abundant occasion in these later days to reverse its judgment and to rejoice in a daughter-town, whose marked and meritorious prosperity has not only been a sufficient ground of motherly pride and satisfaction, but a source of profit and a blessing in many other ways to itself and its inhabitants.

**The Proposed Town of Belvoir.** In the warrant calling the meeting at which final action was taken in regard to the setting off territory for the purpose of helping to form the town of Gardner, an article was inserted upon the petition of a number of the inhabitants of the northeasterly part of the town, to know whether the voters would set the petitioners, with their estates lying within certain boundaries to be subsequently given, to the town of Fitchburg. It was summarily voted to dismiss the article.

But this was not the end of the matter. Nor, indeed, was it the beginning of it. It was an incidental part of a plan previously concocted by interested parties living in the same general neighborhood, which included contiguous portions of the towns of Fitchburg, Westminster, Ashburnham, and Ashby. The plan in its ultimate purpose contemplated the formation of an entirely new township in the locality designated, and originated with those of the parties referred to, belonging to the first of the towns named. The whole history of the affair from the outset would occupy too much space to be given here — only its most salient points will therefore be noted.

Fitchburg at the time was a settlement of but a few hundred inhabitants, the great majority of whom were scattered sparsely over its wide territory. There was a small cluster of houses near by where the railroad station now is, in the vicinity of which stood the meetinghouse. The next most thickly settled portion of the town was in the extreme northwest corner, on what was called Deane Hill, some four miles away and difficult of access. Very likely this was the most enterprising and prosperous part of the town. At any rate, it had a commanding position, the soil was fertile, and the people there prided themselves upon the favorable circumstances in which they were situated, constituting, as they did, a little community of their own, isolated for the most part from the rest of their fellow-citizens, but having a goodly number of neighbors in adjoining towns.





The time came at length when a new meetinghouse was to be built, and the location of it was a question of great interest to all the population. The old one had stood at a point quite away from the center of the territory, in a direction opposite that of the Deane Hill residents. While some were tenacious of the old site, many were earnestly opposed to it and demanded a new one. There was much controversy upon the subject, engendering strong and bitter feeling, especially on the part of the residents just referred to. To end the strife on their part, and to be altogether rid of their troublesome fellow-townsmen, as well as for the sake of better accommodation, the idea of a new township sprang up among them, as a practicable and desirable thing to be consummated. Another consideration tending to confirm this idea in their minds and to induce them to strive for its realization, grew out of the fact that the river, which has since been a most important factor in the increasing prosperity of the place, was regarded by them as very much of a nuisance—as a curse rather than a blessing to the people. Their taxes were largely increased to pay damages to roads and bridges, caused by the freshets that from time to time occurred by reason of it, for which they received no adequate returns. From this burden they would be relieved by being incorporated as a separate municipality.

A new town then was the panacea for many of their ills, and to the formation of a new town they directed their efforts. They enlisted in the project their neighbors in Westminster, Ashburnham, and Ashby, hoping by the co-operation of all three to secure the end in view. They fancied they had a good case. They believed they, with their coadjutors, possessed the requisites of an independent, self-supporting community—a sufficient population, ample territory, financial means, enterprise, etc. They had, too, in their midst two taverns, Jacob Upton's in Fitchburg and Jedediah Cooper's in Westminster, a store kept by Capt. John Upton, and a blacksmith's shop. A Doctor Ball practised medicine in the vicinity, watchful of the various ills that flesh is heir to. Only a meetinghouse and minister were wanting to make their equipment for a town complete, and these were to be provided at an early day, as will soon be seen.

And so in due time these people came before their fellow-citizens with their project formulated as follows: "to see if the town will set off the inhabitants of the North-west part of Fitchburg with their lands and privileges free and clear to join the extreme [north] part of Westminster with the South-east part of Ashburnham to be incorporated into a town to have town privileges as other towns." The other parts of Fitchburg rallied in full numbers and "voted to dismiss the article." Baffled in this attempt their fertile minds invented another expedient to secure the end in view. It was to have a strip of



Westminster with some twenty families annexed to Fitchburg, hoping, no doubt, that if they could carry this proposition they would so increase the number of their friends on the voting list as to have a majority on their side, and thus get leave to form a new township when they should see fit to ask for it again. But this failed as did the previous effort. Their opponents probably understood the attempted game, and did not suffer themselves to be caught in the trap set for them. Moreover, Westminster had a voice in that matter and, as has been stated, refused to let a portion of her people and their possessions go, as petitioned to do.

Although there was agitation in Fitchburg all the while as time went on upon this matter, it was not till Dec. 20, 1790, that it came before the citizens of Westminster a second time for consideration. The request at that date on the part of "a number of inhabitants in the North-east part of the town" was "to be set off (with lands as described measuring 4231 acres) and to unite with others in forming a separate town." It was again voted "to dismiss the article." Whereupon, the interested parties, acting conjointly with their Fitchburg coadjutors, who had been similarly treated by their fellow-townsmen, appealed to a higher power—the Legislature of the Commonwealth—in a petition signed by Jacob Upton and sixty-three others, presented to the Senate Feb. 1, 1791. This petition can not be found, but some indications of what it was have come to light. It set forth the great disadvantages under which the signers of it labored by reason of their isolated position, distance from the place of worship, etc., and also the advantages to be derived from being incorporated as a distinct township by themselves, painting in extravagant and glowing colors the natural beauty and fitness of the locality for the purpose desired.

The citizens of Westminster apprised of what was going on, at the annual March meeting chose Captain Edgell, Abner Holden, and Captain Bigelow a committee to confer with committees of the other towns concerned and unite upon some uniform plan of opposition to the project. The result of this action was an agreement that each town should send a remonstrance to the General Court and also secure as many protests as possible from individuals residing upon the territory proposed to be set off to form the new town. Pursuant thereto, Josiah Puffer and Abner Holden were appointed a committee to prepare a remonstrance and submit it to the citizens for approval. This was done at a meeting held May 19th, the action of the committee being satisfactory. The document was a lengthy one, covering four large, closely written pages of the clerk's records, and so can not be inserted here. It was thorough and exhaustive, and, withal, somewhat crisp and spicy.

This remonstrance, with others equally expressive and urgent



from other towns, settled the matter with the legislature and the petitioners had "leave to withdraw." There the matter of a new town in the locality designated rested for twenty-four years, coming up again in 1815, as will be noted in proper place and time.

**The Lord's Barn.** Simultaneously with the movement for a new town just described, there arose and was carried forward to partial completion a project for the building of a house of worship in the same neighborhood. Indeed, this project was a part of the same general plan, and was no doubt designed to exert an influence in favor of a separate municipality. This, the following agreement, found among a large collection of papers relating to the matter, very clearly shows.

"We the Subscribers are desirous to be set off from the several towns to which we belong and join mutually with each other and build a meeting-house near the Laws' corner by the County Road."

This paper was signed by fifty-seven persons; thirty-three from Fitchburg, sixteen from Westminster, six from Ashburnham, and two from Ashby, showing the relative interest of the several towns in the general object designed to be secured. The Westminster signers were Capt. Joseph Flint, Thomas Laws, John Martyn, Porter Flint, Thomas Laws, Jr., Saml. Martin, Jedediah Cooper, James Laws, John Ward, Aaron Bolton, Mr. (Nathan) Wood, John Goodale, Jonathan Smith, John Hadley, Lieut. Jonathan Flint, Isaac Brooks.

This agreement has no date, but is presumed to have been drawn in 1785 or early in 1786. On the 31st of May in the last named year the subscribers, and probably others, met at the house of Jacob Upton in Fitchburg and voted "to build a meeting-house near Mr. Thomas Laws corner." At a subsequent meeting it was "voted to set up the frame 45 feet square with a hipped roof," and Captain Flint, Reuben Smith, and Abraham Willard were made a committee "to draw an obligation for those persons to sign that are disposed to assist in building said house." The result appears in the following paper:

"We the subscribers do obligate ourselves to get such a number of Lots of Timber for a Meeting-house frame such as we shall subscribe against our names and likewise stone in order to underpin the same and such parts of labor as shall be necessary to effect said building and likewise bring the timber and stone to the spot where said frame is to stand by the first of May next."

This paper was dated Aug. 15, 1786. Of the forty-nine names attached to it, fourteen belonged to Westminster; those of Jonathan Sawyer, Nathaniel Sawyer, Josiah Wheeler, and William Kendall appearing here, though they were not on the previous agreement. Some of the signers contributed material, some labor, and some rye—each according to his disposition,





ability, and convenience. Having proceeded so far, the question of a location for the structure was in order. Mr. David McIntire offered to donate a piece of land for the purpose lying just within the Fitchburg boundary, opposite the house of Thomas Laws, lately occupied by Israel N. Carter. The offer was accepted and security for the land was taken. The work of collecting material for the building went on slowly, and it was not till the spring of 1788 that it was ready for use. On the 19th of April the framing began and continued during the summer. Having been completed, a meeting was held Oct. 24th to prepare for the raising. It was a great undertaking and due provision in the way of facilities and help was to be made. A subscription paper was started to secure pledges for the same. It is still extant, and is an interesting and suggestive document as some of the items indicate. One Westminster signer promises "10 men and their board and 2 gallons of rum"; another, "10 men and 10 quarts of rum"; another, "1 barrel of Cyder"; another, "2 men"; another, "4 quarts of rum." One will furnish "6 spike poles, 18 feet long"; another, "6 spike poles, 15 feet long"; another, "6 spike poles, 20 feet long." It was agreed that the raising should take place October 29th, beginning at sunrise, and it is presumed this was done, though there is no documentary evidence of the fact.

There is no record of another meeting of the proprietors of the building for nearly a year. On the 9th of September, 1789, they came together and it was voted "to sell the pues." A seemingly strange proceeding, when it is remembered not only that there was not a "pue" in the house, but that there was little more than the skeleton of a house yet standing, the frame having been only partially covered and enclosed, making it necessary to advertise for boards, shingles, nails, and men to finish the same. Nevertheless, out of the thirty-six "pues" provided for in the plan of the building, nineteen were speedily sold. The only Westminster purchasers were John Goodale, Jedediah Cooper, Isaac Brooks, and Joseph Polley. So far as the records show, these were the only sales of the property that were ever made.

At length the building was so far completed as to afford some degree of protection from the weather, and warrant the attempt to hold religious services in it. At a meeting of those interested, held July 7, 1790, it was voted "to have preaching in the new meeting-house as soon as may be." It was also voted to have Mr. Payson, Mr. Rice, Mr. Cushing, and Mr. Adams, ministers of the several towns to which the proprietors belonged, preach. It was also at the same meeting agreed "to have some seats prepared," "to hear Mr. Garner," and "to send for Mr. Brown." Later in the season, the following letter was written by a committee of the proprietors to Rev. Mr. Whitney, minister of Shirley:



"FROM THE PROPRIETORS OF THE NEW MEETING-HOUSE IN FITCHBURG.

*"Reverend Sir.* It is our desire that you would extend so far your Piety [pity?] towards us as to come and give us a Day's preaching in the New Meeting-house that we have lately set up on purpose for the publick worship. And we humbly hope that our gratitude therefor will be no disagreeable return for so great a favor.

"Sept ye 7<sup>th</sup> 1790."

Whether or not the several clerical gentlemen named responded favorably to the invitations proffered them does not appear. Probably some of them did, if not all. But these proprietors probably found that something more than gratitude was needed to secure ministerial services, and hence on the 18th of August, 1791, a committee was chosen "to carry a Subscription paper around to get money to hire preaching with." It was afterward agreed "to send for Mr. Fuller [of Princeton] to come and preach a day and also for Mr. Davis to come again."

Records of several unimportant meetings of the proprietors, held during the year 1792, have been preserved in a little improvised manuscript book still extant, after which time nothing was inserted therein till "Apr. ye 12, 1799," when it was "voted that a Committee consisting of Dr. Benjamin Marshall, Mr. Jackson Durrant, and Lieut. John Goodale," be appointed "to git subscribers." And there the record abruptly comes to an end.

All that is known of this meetinghouse subsequent to the date last named, and that is very little, is derived from tradition and the memory of some of the older inhabitants of the neighborhood. It was never finished as a place of worship, never had a pew put into it, never dedicated, and never represented in any proper sense any parish or organized body of Christian believers. So far as has been learned, no regular religious services were ever held in it for a single year. In its later history, its doors were opened to preachers and exhorters of any and every form of religious doctrine, and to those of no form of doctrine, who might desire to occupy it, or whom any in the vicinity might wish to hear. But the calls for such desultory use gradually decreased with the passing years, finally ceasing altogether, when it became a storehouse for lumber and whatever trumpery residents in the vicinity might be pleased to place within its walls. Severely plain in architectural form, unfinished from the beginning, suffering by neglect and the ravages of time, it early won the expressive sobriquet of "The Lord's Barn," the name by which it was generally known for many years previous to its destruction, about 1830. No memorial marks the spot where it stood for more than a generation.

It has been often supposed that this meetinghouse was erected originally by a set of free-thinking heretics, or friends of irreligion and infidelity, for the sake of propagating views hostile to all forms of Christian faith, and so obnoxious to the community at large; or by persons who cared nothing for any





of these things, who devised this undertaking as a means of getting rid of supporting the established religious institutions of the towns to which they respectively belonged. Attention to the facts presented in the accompanying narration will satisfy any one that such was not the case, though some of the later occurrences connected with the use of the building may have furnished some ground for such a conclusion. The house was the work of the inhabitants of the neighborhood, irrespective of creed or opinion, and there is no good reason for doubting that at the heart of the movement, of which it was a marked feature, there was an honest purpose to bring the opportunity of Christian worship and the privileges of religious education within easy reach of the people in whose midst it stood, so far removed were they from all existing meetinghouses. As regards those engaged in the movement residing in Westminster, it may be said that they were mostly connected with the town church and contributed to its support, and it is to be presumed that the same was true of the others. Besides, the ministers invited to preach at the outset, according to the records, were men not only of acknowledged piety but of the soundest faith, according to the standard of the times, being of good repute and holding high positions in the religious community.

**Division of the County.** During the period of thirty years now under review, Westminster was called upon to participate in several movements designed to effect a division of the County of Worcester. Indeed, as early as 1763, as previously noted, one of the items of business at a meeting held July 26th, was "to Know the minds of the District about Petitioning the General Court to be sett off with the Westerly part of ye County of Worcester and Easterly part of ye County of Hampshire [which then included what is now Franklin and Hampden] and to be erected into a Distinct and Separat County." The vote on the question "passed in the Negative."

In the year 1784 the subject was again agitated, and on the 23d of June the town voted "that a Division of the County of Worcester is necessary," and Col. John Rand, Abner Holden, and Elisha Bigelow were chosen a committee to act with committees of other towns in reference to the matter. Nothing further is reported of this effort at the time, but the following year it was renewed, and a petition was sent to the Legislature by interested parties praying for a new county to be formed out of contiguous parts of Worcester and Hampshire Counties, as contemplated twenty years before. The town sent in a remonstrance to that petition in which the views of the citizens were very fully expressed. They confess to "the truth of many or most of the facts set forth in the petition and beg Leave to observe that all the Northerly part of the County of Worcester are at an Extreordinary Expense and Trouble to obtain Justice



in the way of Law, the Distance from the Shire Town, the multiplicity of business, the Increase of Travel fees, with many other things so Increase Cost upon the Subject that it becomes almost intolerable to bare and a Redress of these Grievances becomes of absolute Necessity." But the proposed action "can by no means answer the End wished for," they say, as it would be "but a partial Relief," putting a large number of towns in the county of Worcester "under the same or worse Desadvantage" as those helped by it, "and what is worse, no hopes left of ever obtaining Redress" as the number of towns thus discommoded would be insufficient for a separate county, etc. They further observe that "the Northerly part of Worcester County, if divided from East to West will be sufficient to forme a County within themselves without breaking into any other County," and as a remedy for existing ills they "would moste Humbly and Earnestly move to this Honourable Court" that "the Towns of Lunenburg, Fitchburg, Leominster, Lancaster, Sterling, Westminster, princeton, Hubbardston, petersham, Athol, Berry, Hardwick, and Harvard—may be set of as a County by themselves and that the Town that Lieth Nearest the Senter may be the Shire Town." Very naturally both of the propositions submitted to the Legislature were rejected, and neither Petersham, the heart of the original movement, nor Westminster was raised to the dignity of a shire town, as may have been fondly anticipated by some of those who strongly favored the project.

In 1791 the inhabitants of the northwest part of Worcester County again made an effort for a new county. A convention was held at Petersham, to which Capt. Elisha Bigelow was sent as delegate, but nothing was accomplished thereby. In 1796 the experiment was repeated, the convention, to which Captain Bigelow was again delegate, meeting at Templeton, but the result was the same as before.

Two years later the General Court so far indulged those desirous of a division of Worcester County as to pass a resolve on the 3d of March, authorizing towns interested in the matter to vote upon the question. The result in Westminster was 82 in favor of the proposition and 5 against it. Probably the aggregate vote was largely the other way, which settled the matter for that time. On the 6th of November, 1800, a convention in the same behalf was held at Templeton, in which the town was represented by Abel Wood, who was instructed "to act his best Judgement" in the matter. But nothing came of this, as nothing came of similar action taken at several different dates during the next seventy years. The final issue of all the efforts made to dismember the great county which comprises the "Heart of the Commonwealth" has been to leave it essentially as it was at the beginning, unimpaired and secure in its integrity and completeness, and destined to



remain so in all probability as long as counties exist or the state endures.

**Valuation of the Town in 1798.** It will throw considerable light upon the condition of the population of Westminster at the close of the last and opening of the present century, as well as give the names of the families and responsible persons then resident within its borders, to present a calendar or table showing who were the owners or occupants of homesteads and lands, the extent of the latter, and the appraised value of each, respectively. It is prepared from tax lists made by order of the national government in 1798, and under the direction of assessors appointed and commissioned for that especial duty, of whom Ebenezer Jones, Jonas Miles, and Abel Wood were chosen for this district, and may be deemed, generally speaking, correct and reliable. The first column gives the names of the tax payers; the second, the number of houses owned; the third, the valuation of the house or houses, including the lots not exceeding one-fourth of an acre each; the fourth, the amount of land in acres; the fifth, the valuation of the land; the sixth, the value of total taxable property. A few outbuildings and other unimportant items are omitted. The names appear in the order found in the list. Those with star (\*) prefixed were non-residents.

NAMES.	Houses.	Value.	Acres land.	Value.	Total.
Adams, John . . . . .	I	\$102	22	\$ 273	\$ 375
Bigelow, Jabez . . . . .	I	750	258	2,631	3,381
Bigelow, Ephraim . . . . .	I	380	118	775	1,155
Bigelow, Elisha . . . . .	I	790	537	5,790	6,586
*Barnard, Benjamin . . . . .	I	30	129	773	803
Baker, Nathan . . . . .	I	10	15	55	65
Bartlett, Daniel . . . . .	I	580	62	458	1,038
Bigelow, Luke . . . . .	I	150	22	350	500
Bolton, Aaron . . . . .	I	150	57	660	810
Brown, Josiah . . . . .	I	60	1-2	78	138
Beard, Joseph . . . . .	I	36	66	649	685
Barnes, Francis . . . . .	I	30	3-4	58	98
Blodgett, Isaac . . . . .	I	40	60	410	450
*Brooks, Samuel . . . . .			65	520	520
*Boulding(?), David, and Abel Maynard . . . . .			75	500	500
*Beaman, Jonas . . . . .			60	720	720
*Bowman Heirs . . . . .			15	45	45
Bond, Thaddeus . . . . .	I	500	165	1,737	2,237
Bacon, Edward . . . . .	I	101	120	1,166	1,267
Bemis, Zacheus . . . . .	I	220	100	1,000	1,220
Bigelow, John . . . . .	I	130	72	730	760
Bemis, Ebenezer . . . . .			73	490	490
Bemis, Edmund . . . . .	I	300	125	1,420	1,720
Beaman, Joseph (Mrs. Bemis, owner) . . . . .	I	400	110	1,226	1,626
Beaman, Silas . . . . .	I	200	40	793	993
Barnard, Edmund . . . . .	I	500	317	2,690	3,190
Baker, Richard . . . . .	I	350	132	1,076	1,426





NAMES.	Houses.	Value.	Acres land.	Value.	Total.
Bigelow, Benjamin . . . . .	1	\$103	101	\$1,196	\$1,299
Brooks, Samuel . . . . .	1	175	110	801	976
Brooks, Isaac . . . . .	1	410	85	759	1,169
Bemis, Thomas . . . . .	1	103	134	1,106	1,209
Brown, Jonathan . . . . .	1	420	123	1,113	1,533
Child, David . . . . .	1	110	80	549	659
Conant, Thomas . . . . .	2	55	75	603	658
Conant, Thomas, Jr. . . . .	1	110	35	401	511
Cohee, James . . . . .	1	575	232	2,512	3,087
Calef, Stephen . . . . .	1	80	35	440	520
Cooper, Jedediah . . . . .	1	540	150	2,132	2,672
Dunster, Thomas . . . . .	1	45	28	243	288
Derby, Andrew . . . . .	1	200	90	834	1,034
Damon, John . . . . .	1	300	47	896	1,196
Damon, Timothy . . . . .	1	320	88	889	1,209
Derby, Ezra . . . . .	1	150	45	489	639
Derby, Nathan . . . . .	1	200	48	409	609
Derby, John . . . . .	1	350	120	1,330	1,680
Dunn, John . . . . .	1	40	50	425	465
Dike, Nicholas . . . . .	1	150	180	1,245	1,395
Dupée, John . . . . .	1	85	72	900	985
Dunster, Hubbard . . . . .	1	60	53	395	455
Eaton, Nathan . . . . .	2	163	20	238	401
Eaton, Nathaniel . . . . .			40	372	372
Edgell, William . . . . .	2	615	185	1,890	2,505
Estabrook, John . . . . .	1	400	222	1,575	1,975
Everett, Peletiah . . . . .	1	480	4	135	615
*Everett, William . . . . .			9	72	72
*Everett, Joshua . . . . .			18	144	144
*Everett, Joshua, Jr. . . . .			36	288	288
Flint, Benjamin . . . . .	1	105	76	978	1,083
Fessenden, John . . . . .	1	300	157	1,412	1,712
Foskett, Daniel . . . . .	2	220	51	526	746
Farnsworth, Asa . . . . .	1	85	115	1,207	1,292
Gates, Phinehas . . . . .	1	30	10	100	130
Gates, Amos . . . . .			56	956	956
Graves, Jonathan . . . . .	1	1.50	67	68	69.50
Graves, Levi . . . . .			83	783	783
Graves, Peter (Adm'r). . . . .			63	230	230
Gager, Jeremiah . . . . .			70	750	750
Goodale, John . . . . .			140	2,260	2,260
*Gill, Michael . . . . .			15	50	50
*Goodenough, Asa . . . . .			30	200	200
Hoar, Stephen . . . . .	1	870	172	2,981	3,851
Hoar, John . . . . .	1	589	148	1,693	2,282
Hoar, Samuel . . . . .			26	104	104
Hoar, Timothy . . . . .	1	60	72	1,027	1,087
Holden, Stephen . . . . .	1	110	78	839	949
Holden, Abner . . . . .	1	560	254	3,052	3,612
Holden, Abner, Jr. . . . .	1	240	50	930	1,170
Holden, Levi . . . . .	1	400	141	1,144	1,544
Holden, Elias . . . . .	1	70	71	959	1,029
Harrington, Seth . . . . .	1	400	173	2,150	2,550
Heywood, Timothy . . . . .	1	103	159	1,587	1,690
Hager, Jonathan . . . . .	1	480	239	3,425	3,905
Holden, Rebecca (John Brown, occupant) . . . . .	1	480	139	1,974	2,454
Howard, Nathan . . . . .	1	260	150	1,740	2,000
*Heywood, Benjamin . . . . .			120	890	890
*Hazeltine, Benjamin . . . . .			60	100	100
*Houghton, Joel . . . . .			15	45	45
*Kilburn, Sally (Joel Houghton, owner) . . . . .			60	280	280



NAMES.	Houses.	Value.	Acres land.	Value.	Total.
*Hunt, Samuel . . . . .			60	\$ 240	\$ 240
Howard, Micah . . . . .	I	\$ 50	80	370	420
Hadley, John . . . . .	I	50	76	1,072	1,122
Howard, Benjamin . . . . .	I	50	61	443	493
Hall, Elisha . . . . .	I	25	I	35	60
Hall, Elisha . . . . .	I	55	I	65	120
*Hilton, Thomas . . . . .			30	100	100
Howard, Simeon . . . . .			37	275	275
Jones, Ebenezer . . . . .			1-2	530	530
Jones, Ebenezer (Moses Gill, owner) . . . . .			116	1,760	1,760
Jackson, Oliver . . . . .	I	102	93	1,160	1,262
Jackson, Edward . . . . .	I	598	198	1,642	2,240
Jackson, Sebez . . . . .	I	150	51	476	626
Johnson, Thomas . . . . .	I	150	51	476	626
*Jewell, Jacob . . . . .			51	140	140
Kendall, Edward . . . . .	I	275			275
Perry, Silas (E. Kendall, owner)			5	325	325
Knower, Thomas . . . . .	I	150	100	680	830
*Kendall, Joshua . . . . .			180	1,400	1,400
*Kendall, Josiah . . . . .			25	200	200
Laws, Thomas . . . . .	I	120			120
Laws, James, Jr. . . . .	I	120			120
Laws, James, Jr. . . . .	I	80	99	1,180	1,260
Laws, Thomas . . . . .	I	60	90	1,583	1,643
Laws, Thomas, Jr. . . . .			60	335	335
*Livermore, Elijah . . . . .			78	330	330
Mosman, Abel (B. & J. Lynde, owners) . . . . .			186	1,346	1,346
Minot, Jonathan . . . . .	I	500	124	1,143	1,643
Miles, Noah . . . . .	I	320			320
Miller, Samuel . . . . .	I	220	89	1,125	1,345
Mosman, Samuel . . . . .	I	600	143	1,539	2,139
Miller, Isaac . . . . .	I	101	60	645	746
Miles, Jonas . . . . .	I	700	92	1,657	2,357
Miles, John . . . . .	I	360	73	1,000	1,360
Merriam, Asa . . . . .	I	150			150
Merriam, Thomas . . . . .	I	320	300	3,404	3,724
Merriam, Samuel . . . . .	I	150	80	1,152	1,302
Martin, John . . . . .	I	460	118	1,800	2,260
Miller, Joseph . . . . .	I	170	59	953	1,123
Matthews, Paul . . . . .	I	300	80	870	1,170
Murdock, John . . . . .	I	440			440
Murdock, William . . . . .			66	896	896
Maynard, David . . . . .	I	36	58	560	596
Miles, Stephen . . . . .			177	1,543	1,543
Miles, Trow . . . . .	I	15	77	428	443
Mosman, Samuel . . . . .	I	10			10
Mosman, Samuel, Jr. . . . .			43	180	180
Miles, Asa . . . . .			82	411	411
Wiswall, John (J. Miles, owner)	I	15	2	135	150
Miles, Jonas (Reuben's heirs) .			90	871	871
Miller, John . . . . .			31	310	310
Miles, Isaac . . . . .	I	40	57	805	845
Miller, Ephriam . . . . .	I	480	186	1,846	2,326
Miles, Thomas . . . . .			60	580	580
*Merriam, John . . . . .			60	500	500
Nichols, Benjamin . . . . .	I	50	120	767	817
*Nichols, Jeremiah . . . . .			30	150	150
Newton, Timothy . . . . .			90	400	400
Penniman, William . . . . .	I	980	65	716	1,696
Pierce, Jarvis . . . . .	I	325	15	195	520
Pierce, John . . . . .	I	110	61	609	719





NAMES.	Houses.	Value.	Acres land	Value.	Total.
Phillips, Jonathan . . . . .	I	\$140	2	\$ 72	\$ 212
Puffer, Jonas . . . . .	I	102	102	877	979
Puffer, Josiah . . . . .	I	280	107	1,627	1,907
Melendy, Richard (N. Parker, owner) . . . . .	I	150	80	1,035	1,185
Pierce, Elisha . . . . .	I	30	56	256	286
*Pierce, Abijah . . . . .			60	420	420
*Perkins, Benjamin . . . . .			60	200	200
Rice, Rev. Asaph (exempt) . . .					
Fenno, Ephraim (A. Rice, owner)	I	16			16
Ray, Heman . . . . .	I	103	108	941	1,044
Rand, Zachariah . . . . .	I	450	33	450	900
Rand, Zachariah (John's heirs),			38	304	304
Raymond, Jonathan . . . . .	I	200	54	500	700
Robbins, Ephraim . . . . .	I	175	80	575	750
Wheeler, Nathaniel (Z. Rand, owner) . . . . .	I	90	175	1,200	1,290
Sawin, Daniel . . . . .	I	101			101
Sawin, Joseph . . . . .	I	200			200
Sawin, Jonathan . . . . .	I	110	62	416	526
Sawin, James . . . . .	I	200			200
Sawin, Samuel . . . . .	I	320	71	636	956
Sawin, David . . . . .	I	400	124	1,151	1,551
Sawin, Abner . . . . .	I	15	60	215	230
Sawin, Daniel . . . . .	I	30	135	595	625
Sawin, Joseph (Reuben's heirs),	I	40	175	1,018	1,058
Sawin, James . . . . .	I	20	111	602	622
Smith, Silas . . . . .	I	115	60	685	800
Smith, Charles . . . . .	I	400	31	482	882
Smith, Thadeus . . . . .	I	200	60	507	707
Shumway, Abishai . . . . .	I	290	20	405	695
Sampson, Abraham . . . . .	I	300	57	386	686
Spaulding, Joseph . . . . .	I	150	120	1,208	1,358
Spaulding, Zebina . . . . .	I	105	15	239	344
Seaver, Benjamin . . . . .	I	102	220	1,314	1,416
Seaver, Sarah . . . . .			28	196	196
*Simonds, Joseph . . . . .			70	450	450
Smith, Joseph . . . . .	I	15	25	115	130
Sawyer, Jonathan . . . . .	I	740	275	2,900	3,640
Sawyer, Eli . . . . .	I	230	168	1,800	2,030
Smith, Jonathan . . . . .	I	20	60	659	679
*Smith, William . . . . .			30	175	175
*Sawyer, Thomas . . . . .			30	150	150
Sawyer, Amos . . . . .	I	90	90	1,400	1,490
*Sheldon, Amos . . . . .			32	133	133
Taft, Asa . . . . .	I	101	96	800	901
Thurston, Moses . . . . .	I	320	26	601	921
Taylor, Asa . . . . .	I	465	158	958	1,423
Tottingham, Nathaniel . . . . .	I	220	62	671	891
Taylor, Samuel . . . . .	I	105	70	540	645
Taylor, Joseph . . . . .	I	15	66	634	649
Whitney, Nathan . . . . .	I	520	262	3,182	3,702
Woodward, John . . . . .	I	103	120	1,316	1,419
Woodward, Nathaniel . . . . .	I	180	60	240	420
Wetherbee, Thomas . . . . .	I	105	53	386	491
Wetherbee, Ephraim . . . . .	I	200	60	507	707
Wilder, Joel . . . . .	I	480	75	725	1,205
Whitman, Zachariah . . . . .	I	780	287	2,260	3,040
Warren, Jeduthan . . . . .	I	101	150	909	1,010
Wheeler, Thomas . . . . .	I	103			103
Wheeler, Josiah . . . . .	I	775	181	2,221	2,996
Wyman, David . . . . .	I	160	57	304	464
Wyman, David . . . . .	I	50	1-2	52	102



NAMES.	Houses.	Value.	Acres land.	Value.	Total.
White, James . . . . .			107	\$1,048	\$1,048
Whitney, Nathan, Jr. . . . .	I	\$380	130	1,362	1,742
Wetherbee, Caleb . . . . .			9	152	152
Leonard, Samuel ( Jas. White, owner) . . . . .	I	15	58	546	561
Whitcomb, Oliver . . . . .	I	40	80	740	780
Winship, Jonas . . . . .	I	102	12	90	192
Winship, Jonas, Jr. . . . .	I	200	63	681	881
Winship, Cyrus . . . . .	I	250	125	1,776	2,026
Wood, Nathan . . . . .	I	50	60	699	749
Wheeler, Hayman . . . . .			197	1,031	1,031
Ward, John . . . . .	I	40	126	1,052	1,092
Jackson, Oliver ( J. Winship, owner) . . . . .			40	400	400
Whitney, Abner . . . . .	I	101	195	1,709	1,810
Whitney, Alpheus . . . . .	I	160	120	1,249	1,409
Whitney, Phinchas . . . . .	I	275	90	1,177	1,452
Whitney, Elisha . . . . .	I	15	35	335	350
Whitney, David . . . . .	I	380			380
Whitney, John . . . . .	I	520			520
Whitney, Joel . . . . .	I	105	65	746	851
Whitney, Jonas . . . . .	I	355	113	1,151	1,506
Williams, Isaac . . . . .	I	210	218	2,166	2,376
Wood, Ahijah . . . . .	I	819	164	1,333	2,152
Wood, Abel . . . . .	I	690	181	1,493	2,183
Walker, James . . . . .	I	50	70	581	631
Wiswall, Noah . . . . .	I	70	250	1,151	1,227
Whitney, Samuel . . . . .	I	50	315	3,160	3,210
Walker, Paul . . . . .	I	70		143	213
*Houghton, Abel (D. Willard, owner) . . . . .			60	380	380
*Warren, Joseph . . . . .			30	240	240
Wheeler, Mary . . . . .			13	78	78
Flint, Ezekiel . . . . .	I	60	85	435	495

According to this table there were in town, at the date represented (1798), 186 dwellings of taxable value; very likely there were a few others too old or worthless to be enumerated. The entire ratable property, exclusive of the estate of Rev. Mr. Rice, seems to have been \$240,890.50, somewhat variously distributed, yet not unlike what appears in all communities at any given period of their history.

At the close of the last century the population of Westminster was scattered very generally over its territory, the tendency to concentrate in villages and closely settled districts not yet having manifested itself in country towns to any appreciable extent. The section now covered by the Central Village had upon it, until nearly that date, only eight dwelling houses, although half a dozen new ones, including the hotel, had been erected during the few previous years—the beginning of an increase which continued for two or three decades with considerable rapidity. This growth was stimulated largely by the construction of the Fifth Massachusetts Turnpike, which brought a greatly extended amount of travel through the place, and helped to make it a center of trade for the people of a wide area of out-



lying country. Corresponding to this village enlargement was the decline of the population outside, and of agricultural interests that had prevailed almost universally till then, as evidenced by the abandonment of many of the original homesteads of the town. This was the inauguration of a change of social relations and industrial pursuits which has continued with varying irregularity to the present day, and which will receive further notice later on.





## CHAPTER XII.

### THOROUGHFARES, BRIDLE WAYS, AND BRIDGES.

TOWN AND COUNTY ROADS — FIFTH MASSACHUSETTS TURNPIKE —  
VERMONT AND MASSACHUSETTS (FITCHBURG) RAILROAD.

It is generally believed that the pioneer settlers of Narragansett No. 2, in coming to what was designed to be their future home, were obliged to make their way from Lancaster, the nearest settlement in the direction of the more densely populated communities whence they migrated, through an unbroken forest, with a pocket compass for their guide, or perchance, blazed trees bearing the marks of committees of the General Court, surveyors, or other explorers who had preceded them. Such, however, was not the case, except for a very short distance lying wholly within the boundaries of the township. In the year 1733 the Provincial Legislature had caused a highway to be laid out and opened for travel from Lancaster to Sunderland, and hence called the "Sunderland Road," for the convenience of the plantations already established at Deerfield and vicinity, in the valley of the Connecticut River. This highway entered the town a little distance north of Everettville, passing thence westwardly in a nearly straight line across the narrow part of Wachusett Lake, and up over the hills not far from the residences of the late Cephas Bush and Betsey Bacon, to a point in the Hubbardston boundary, southwardly of the homestead of the late Joel Newton, and so on through Templeton, Petersham, etc., to its western terminus. Though no signs of it have been visible for many a day, and though it is almost wholly lost to "the memory of the oldest inhabitant," yet it was an actual thoroughfare and served an important purpose until superseded by others built and maintained by, or for the convenience of, the various settlements along its route. A plan of it is still preserved at the State House, indicating its general course, and giving its length in three sections as follows: "from Lancaster to Wachusett pond is 11 miles, and from sd pond to meeting-house Place in Volunteers township [Petersham] is 14 miles, and from thence to Sunderland is 23 miles." Moreover, the parties who originally built this road were compensated for their labors, wholly or in part, by the grant of a township adjoining Sunderland, which was called Roadstown at first, but incorporated in 1764 as Shutesbury. And furthermore, at a meeting of the proprietors of Petersham in 1734, Capt. Jonas Houghton,



a noted surveyor and contractor of those days, was voted certain privileges and a sum of money "for making the road so feasible from Lancaster along the north side of Wachusett as to carry comfortably 4 barrels of cider with 4 oxen at once," which shows what then constituted a "feasable" road as well as what was an important farm product of those days, and a supposed-to-be necessary article of consumption. "Sunderland Road" is occasionally mentioned in the records of the proprietors' clerk, and in some of the early conveyances of lands in the southerly part of the township.

It has already been stated that in the original "laying out" of the lands of the township in 1734, the dividing committee, whose action was accepted by the proprietors, made provision for a highway, of which the main street is a section, extending in opposite directions as far as the survey went. This road was continued southeastwardly, no doubt, until it struck the Sunderland Road somewhere within what is known as the No-town addition, between Everettville and Crow Hill. And it was over this road that the early settlers, especially those locating in the central and northerly portions of the then surveyed territory, passed to and from their new homes for twelve or fifteen years, or until the county road was constructed from Lancaster to Athol in 1754. This appears from the fact that at a proprietors' meeting, Oct. 31, 1739, as the records say, "the vote was put whether they would Clear the Road from Crow Hill to the meeting House," which "passed in the Negative," indicating the location of the first highway established in the township. It is proper to state here, that, in addition to this principal street, provided for by the dividing committee, there were also, as the original plan shows, numerous subordinate ones running between different lots in localities where it was thought they might be needed. Few of these were ever used for the purpose designed, and they but for a brief season. The only one that became a permanent highway was that lying between lots No. 11 and 12, the first half mile, from the Nichols Bros.' chair factory, of what is known as the road to Hubbardston.

The first action relating to highways, of the proprietors of Narragansett No. 2, of which a record has been found, took place Nov. 23, 1737, a few months after a settlement had been effected, when, at a meeting in Cambridge, Benjamin Brown, Joseph Holden, and Joseph Lynde were appointed "to look out and mend the Road from Lancaster to the Township and through the same to the Meeting-house Spot in said town," "where it will best accommodate the whole town." It is to be presumed that these gentlemen attended to the duty assigned them, continuing in service until their successors, Joseph Holden, Fairbanks Moor, and Joseph Miller were appointed nearly three years afterward. On the 10th of September, 1740, it was voted "to pay those that had marked a road through the





township" and £10 were granted for that purpose and "to clear said road." Nothing very definite was done thereafter with reference to highways for several years. Committees were occasionally appointed to care for them, but no report of their doings was made and no new public highways seem to have been projected. Probably each settler, or group of settlers living near together, cut a rude path through the forest where it was found to be most easy and convenient to do so, and in this way the general need of the plantation was fairly well supplied without the intervention of the propriety.

At length, on the 26th of October, 1749, Joseph Miller, Daniel Cook, and Jonathan Watson were made a committee "to Lay out such ways in the propriety as they shall Judge necessary, making report of their doings," etc. At a meeting held Sept. 13, 1750, they reported several roads upon which action was taken as recorded by the clerk, thus:

"Voted and accepted of the Road Laid out to Lunenburg from No. 2.

"Voted and accepted of the Road Laid to Sunderland Road.

"Voted and accepted of y<sup>e</sup> Road from y<sup>e</sup> town Streat to Mr. Darbe's Land, and from Daniel Walker's to the parting of the Roads, and from the Lot No. thirty nine to the aforesaid Road. Voted the Roads now laid out be three Rods wide."

These are all the facts that have been obtained in regard to these several highways, and it is not an easy matter to locate them; but from a knowledge of the condition of things in the young settlement at the time, their general courses may be inferred. The first, in all probability, started at or near the site of the old Baptist meetinghouse and ran in an easterly direction through the present cemetery grounds, near the residence of George Harris, and thence not far from the line of the old turnpike, or possibly by a more northerly course, into what is now Fitchburg, then a part of Lunenburg, and so on to Lunenburg meetinghouse. The second was substantially the present traveled way from the same point to Wachusett Lake, past the house of Theodore S. Wood, where a beginning had already been made, as there had also at the Larrabee place below. The third extended from the Common around the end of the pond. The fourth was substantially the road, as it now lies, from what is known as Parker's Corner to where the late Isaac Seaver lived, Daniel Walker, his great-grandfather, being the first occupant of that site. Originally this road seems to have followed a direct line from the corner east of the house of the late Calvin Baker to the late residence of Doctor Liverpool; and the fifth of the list named above was simply a branch of the fourth, leading from that corner to Mr. Baker's.

At this same meeting Philip Bemis, Daniel Hoar, and Joseph Miller were chosen a new road committee, and a tax of eight shillings on each lot, making an aggregate of nearly fifty pounds, was ordered for the purpose of mending the highways.



It was also ordered "that Such as work in the hiways have two Shilings a day from the first of may to ye first of october, and from the first of october to the first of may one Shiling and Six pence Lawful money."

Six weeks afterward, Oct. 24th, the road from the Lunenburg road to lot No. 50, was reported and accepted by the proprietors. This is the first highway the courses and distances of which are preserved in the records. It was the original of the present road from Hobart Raymond's to the North Common, running by the house of the late James R. Bruce.

On the 19th of June, 1751, Daniel Hoar, Samuel Whitney, and Stephen Holden were chosen a committee "to lay out ye Highways in said township," and on the 4th of December following, reported a list of twelve which were duly considered and acted upon by the proprietors. The records of the clerk state the acceptance of only four or five of them, but the original papers relating to them severally have been found, and upon these papers memoranda to the effect that they were all approved and became public thoroughfares. These roads were located in different parts of the township, and with those previously provided for, furnished reasonably adequate facilities for intercommunication between the resident families of the place, and also ready access to the two established settlements on the east, Lunenburg and Lancaster.

The limits of this work will not allow a detailed statement of the action of the town from the beginning to this day upon the subject of which this chapter treats. Nor is such a statement, perhaps, specially desirable. Having indicated briefly how the present extensive and complex road system of the town commenced and became fairly started in its growth, it is deemed sufficient to give in a tabulated form, chronologically arranged, a list of all the public thoroughfares as they have from time to time been laid out and opened to common use, locating them as far as possible in every case. Unimportant changes of location will not be noted, and instances of discontinuance will be referred to only in an incidental way. These thoroughfares will be arranged in the order of their acceptance and construction, and numbered accordingly. To make the list complete, it will begin with the very first and include those already mentioned, though with as little repetition as possible.

#### TABLE OF HIGHWAYS.

1. 1733. Sunderland road, as heretofore described.
2. May 21, 1734. Main Street from Common to Woodward place, and 160 rods of Hubbardston road from Nichols Bros.' chair shop. The part of Main Street as originally laid out southeast of the pond was discontinued at an early day.
3. Sept. 13, 1750. Lunenburg road, running northeasterly from Hobart Raymond's, as before noted. Probably no part of it is now in use.
4. Sept. 13, 1750. The present traveled way essentially from the late J. K. Learned place, *via* T. S. Wood's, to Wachusett Lake.



5. Sept. 13, 1750. The highway connecting the last with the Main Street, extending around the end of the pond to the "Common."
6. Sept. 13, 1750. Road from "Parker's Corner" (so called) to the residence of the late Isaac Seaver, as stated.
7. Sept. 13, 1750. Branch of the latter to the late Calvin Baker house, the principal road as first laid out running in a nearly straight line from "Miles' Corner" (so called) to the Joshua Liverpool place.
8. Oct. 24, 1750. The eastwardly North Common thoroughfare, passing by the dwelling of C. B. Cooley. This road extended as far north as the house of Sewall Morse, where Mr. Ebenezer Taylor then resided.
9. Dec. 4, 1751. "From lot 83 to 85." This was an extension of road No. 6, and ran from the Isaac Seaver place to the house of Calvin Whitney.
10. Dec. 4, 1751. This was a short highway laid out for the benefit of William Bemis, who lived where the late Willard Battles did, and extended from that place to the Lunenburg road, a few rods south of the tomb, most of it being represented by the present road.
11. Dec. 4, 1751. Running from the Lunenburg road in the neighborhood of where George Harris now lives, on or near the line of the existing road, by the sawmill site at the head of "the Narrows," thence southwardly to the homestead of William H. Benjamin, then occupied by Ephraim Stevens.
12. Dec. 4, 1751. This ran from the easterly road to the North Common, past the present Widow Martha Cutler house, to a point some fifty rods below the residence of the late Thomas Merriam, where a house then stood occupied by James Taylor.
13. Dec. 4, 1751. This was a branch of the road to the North Common, leaving it near the present town farm, and running westerly to lot No. 45, above where George W. Whitney resides, then the home of Josiah Cutting.
14. Dec. 4, 1751. An extension northward of No. 8 from Sewall Morse's to the Dickinson place, then improved by John Sangar.
15. Dec. 4, 1751. A road running from the corner near the former Dike place, southwardly by the Reed Merriam place, to the town line—a part of the westerly Princeton road.
16. Dec. 4, 1751. From lot No. 36, the present home of Mrs. Foster in South Westminster, to Miles' Corner, sixty rods in length.
17. Dec. 4, 1751. The Bacon Street road, extending from Main Street to the Winship place on Prospect Hill, sometimes called "Hopkins' road."
18. Dec. 4, 1751. Essentially the present road from the old Common southwesterly to the former homestead of George Miles; also a short branch from near the Eager house southwardly eighteen rods, to where Reuben Miles then had a residence.
19. Dec. 4, 1751. An extension of the last, westward two hundred rods, by the Bigelow homestead to the neighborhood of the sawmill site.
20. Dec. 4, 1751. From Parker's Corner by the late John K. Learned house to road No. 4. This opened a public thoroughfare from the southerly part of the township to the meetinghouse. There was probably a private way there before, which the inhabitants were permitted to use.
21. Aug. 12, 1752. Extension westward of road No. 19, and ran to a point beyond Pew brook, in what is now South Gardner. It followed the general course of a county road laid two years later, the location of which may still be traced most of the distance, though the central part of it was abandoned seventy or eighty years ago. Its western portion was what is at present High Street, in the village referred to. This highway was undoubtedly laid to accommodate the growing settlements at Narragansett No. 6 (Templeton) and Paquoage (Athol), which had already attained considerable size, and had occasion to communicate frequently with the lower towns. An interesting instance of the indefinite and tantalizing manner in which the laying out of a road was recorded in those days, is found in that part of the clerk's book, which is designed to give the location of this very thoroughfare. A few lines are copied verbatim. "It begins at a Hemlock about four Rods beyond pew Brook so called Near the road [a





mere forest cart-path probably] from thence to a poplar from thence to a poplar from thence to a white pine from thence to a white pine Near to the path that goes to Saturday meadow about seven or eight Rods from ye old path from thence to a Hemlock from thence to a spruce in the Gutter" and so on by twenty more "from thences" to "lot No. fourteen second division to the Road that was formerly laid," etc.

22. Aug. 12, 1752. This was the highway running on the east side of Graves Hill, from Parker's Corner to the corner near the Dike place, by the home of J. Hervey Miller, connecting roads Nos. 15, 20, 4, and 5 in one continuous line from Princeton boundary to the Main Street.

23. Oct. 2, 1753. A county road was laid and ordered to be built from Fitchburg to Dorchester Canada (Ashburnham). It was substantially the present road in the extreme northerly part of the town, running by the residence of James H. Laws.

24. May 1, 1754. A second county road was laid from Lancaster to Paquoage (Athol). Its course was through Kneeland farm (Everettville) "to meeting-house in Narragansett No. 2," mostly "on road as now trod" and thence by Bigelow's westward "to meeting-house in No. 6 [Templeton] as road is now trod." It ran nearly on the lines of roads Nos. 4, 5, 18, 19, and 21, all of which, except a portion of the last, are still in existence and in common use.

25. July 31, 1754. A road was reported, running from Lot No. 91 through 92, and second division lots Nos. 32 and 31, and no doubt built. This was the original of the present thoroughfare by the late dwelling of Lyman Allen and the Beech Hill schoolhouse. The location of the easterly end of it was materially changed some years afterward. Its course as first laid out may still be traced.

26. July 31, 1754. This was an extension of No. 11 southward from the homestead of William H. Benjamin to the county road near the No. 7 schoolhouse.

27. April 23, 1755. An extension of No. 17 from the Winship place to the next lot, No. 47, where Lyman Seaver now resides.

28. Sept. 29, 1756. An extension of No. 10 from where Willard Battles resided, northward by Mrs. Abijah Raymond's, to No. 12.

29. June 1, 1757. A road from Michael Brigden's, now Dr. Liverpool's, eastward over the hill by Hollis Bolton's to the county road, near the outlet of Wachusett Pond.

30. July 5, 1758. Was an extension of No. 14 from the Dickinson place through Scrabble Hollow to a point some half a mile beyond on Bragg Hill, where Asahel Smith then resided, now occupied by E. T. Smith.

31. Jan. 17, 1759. This seems to have been substantially the present extension of Main Street westward to Gardner line.

32. Jan. 17, 1759. From North Common by James Cohee's (I. N. Smith's) to or near where Robert McTaggart recently lived (C. Vinnieg's) on Bean Porridge Hill.

33. Oct. 16, 1759. This appears to have run where the present road does, from the old red schoolhouse site to the house of Alonzo Curtis, and perhaps to the present Warner place, where Nathaniel Merrill but shortly before located.

34. Oct. 16, 1759. From No. 28, by the recent Bathrick place and near the railroad station, to Nathaniel Merrill's (Melville H. Warner's) just mentioned.

35. Oct. 16, 1759. This was No. 27 continued, from Lyman Seaver's, the Spaulding homestead, to Beech Hill.

These were all the roads in existence at the time of the incorporation of Westminster, Oct. 20, 1759. Two of them were county roads; the others had been laid out and built by the proprietors of Narragansett No. 2. The list goes on as follows:



36. March 3, 1760. The first road laid out by the District of Westminster ran from No. 12, the present Cutler road, to house lot No. 53, where Albert Howard now lives.

37. March 2, 1761. This was a continuance of the Beech Hill road, No. 35, to the Divol place, now occupied by S. D. Hobbs.

38. March 2, 1761. A road from the Dickinson house beyond the North Common, northwardly to the Noah May place, then owned by Ebenezer Hart, now Charles H. Smith's.

39. March 2, 1761. In the neighborhood of the Cohee (I. N. Smith) place, branching from the Bean Porridge Hill road, No. 32, and becoming a part of what was afterwards called the "Mink road."

40. March 2, 1761. From John Miles' corner, south of Mrs. Foster's, by Lemuel Houghton's, now South Westminster, to the Damon road at the former Horatio Eager residence.

41. March 1, 1762. This road can not be located. It was in the west part of the town, and may have been the one now leading from the Gardner road, near the old Joshua Moore homestead, to the place now occupied by George M. Blanchard.

42. March 7, 1763. A branch of the original westerly road to Princeton, south of the former residence of Reed Merriam, extending to the town line. Either it has been discontinued, or it is the southerly part of the one now in use. If the latter, then the corresponding part of the original one, No. 15, was discontinued.

43. March 7, 1763. This seems to have been the highway on Beech Hill, running from the previously laid road, No. 35, towards where Mr. Anson Ray now lives.

44. March 7, 1763. Was in the northeast part of the town, extending from near the residence of the late S. N. Barnes, in the direction of, and perhaps to, the former homestead of Eli Sawyer, now abandoned. The course of this road, long since discontinued, may still be traced much of the way.

45. March 7, 1763. "From Stephen Sawin's" (the Betsey Bacon place) by Richard (Calvin) Baker's "to Jos. Horsley's barn," now Dr. Liverpool's.

46. March 5, 1764. Extending from Jonathan Raymond's, late Bathrick place, now owned by Albert Howard, by where Mr. Warner lives, to the Murdock place, belonging to John P. Roper. An improvement and extension of No. 34.

47. March 5, 1764. Represented by the road now running from the Beech Hill schoolhouse by Anson Ray's, to the former residence of Edward and Levi Jackson.

48. March 5, 1764. Ran from the north county road at Laws' Corner, near where W. H. Carter recently lived, substantially as the traveled way now is, crossing the river and ascending the hill, past the Sawyer place, owned by Porter F. Page, thence eastwardly by a route long since discontinued, to the former residence of Eli Sawyer, then owned by Lieut. Tilly Wilder.

49. March 5, 1764. A short branch of the last, running probably to one of the abandoned homesteads in that part of the town.

50. March 18, 1765. This was substantially the present road from the corner, near Widow Abijah Raymond's, to the former homestead of Thomas Merriam, extending thence by a discontinued way northerly, till it came to No. 39. The north part of it was included in the "Mink road" of later years, before mentioned.

51. March 26, 1767. This road extended from the one last described, in a northeasterly direction, to the site of the old Brooks mill by a course now readily followed through the woods and pastures.

52. March 6, 1769. An extension of No. 47 from the former E. and L. Jackson homestead westward into Gardner.

53. March 6, 1769. A short road running from the main one over Bean Porridge Hill westward by the house of Mr. Robinson to the Cowee pasture, where the tokens of an abandoned residence are easily recognized.





54. March 6, 1769. A short road between the house and mill of Dr. Harvey (Asa Brooks) in the northeast part of the town. Not definitely located.

55. March 6, 1769. Probably a relocating of No. 46, and its extension by where Alonzo Curtis resides, to Fitchburg line near the former homestead of Daniel Miles.

56. March 6, 1769. A branch from No. 36 to Nathan Howard's (late Thomas Merriam's) residence. Apparently a relocation of No. 12.

57. January, 1770. A county road was ordered to be built from Winchendon to Worcester, through Westminster. It was the original of the present well known Winchendon road, running along Main Street, and on the line of the westerly Princeton road to the boundary of the town.

58. March 5, 1770. This was the present road from the house of Samuel Bridge to the then county road near the George Miles place, with a branch westward to the land of Thomas (now Charles F.) Knower.

59. May 13, 1771. The last road, continued southward to the Betsey Bacon place, connecting there with one already opened beyond.

60. May 13, 1771. This road ran from the Ezra Brooks place, at the foot of Bean Porridge Hill, up the valley to the Bragg Hill road, No. 30.

61. May 13, 1771. Practically an extension of the last road to the town line, much as the traveled way now runs.

62. Sept. 1, 1772. A county road from Westminster to Ashburnham. It followed the course of the present easterly North Common thoroughfare from the Hobart Raymond corner, thence through Scrabble Hollow and up the valley to South Ashburnham village.

63. Dec. 1, 1772. A county road to Harvard, beginning at the Ashburnham road below Hobart Raymond's, and running easterly to the line of Fitchburg, along or near the course of the old Lunenburg road No. 3, and not far from the subsequent turnpike route. Its exact location can not be determined.

64. March 1, 1773. From near Anson Ray's eastward along the brow of Beech Hill, with perhaps some modification of No. 43, to road leading to the meetinghouse.

65. March 1, 1773. This was a short road in the extreme north section of the town, branching off from No. 48. It possibly ran to the former John S. Hadley, now Vernon S. Fay, place.

66. March 7, 1774. An extension of Bragg Hill road to town line, near Joseph S. Woodward's residence, which stands on what was a part of the John Ward estate at that date.

67. March 7, 1774. A branch from No. 60 to the house of Nathaniel Kezar, who resided on the hill one fourth of a mile in the rear of the residence of the late James Puffer, on second division lot No. 58.

68. March 7, 1774. A short highway at the extreme north part, leading from the county road to the dwelling then occupied by Isaac Brooks, many years since abandoned.

69. March 5, 1775. It ran from the then county road, west of the Bigelow homestead, past the home of Preston P. Ellis to Gardner line.

70. March 5, 1775. The road previously built to where Calvin Whitney now lives was continued by the house now owned by the Whitney Brothers of Worcester, to the town line.

71. March 5, 1775. A way leading from near the Elmer Baker place, Wachusettville, southward to where Hubbard Dunster and Dudley Bailey once lived. Their dwellings long since passed away, but marks of the road may still be seen.

72. March 4, 1776. A continuation, apparently, of No. 53, westward along the summit of Bean Porridge Hill towards Mud Pond. It terminated on lot No. 1, second division, where there was in early days a homestead occupied by Joshua Mellen.

73. March 1, 1779. A road on Bragg Hill, branching off westwardly from that previously laid and running by the former residence of John W. Carr (recently burned) to Ashburnham line.



74. March 1, 1779. A short way opened from the main road over Bean Porridge Hill to the Eli Sawyer residence. Long discontinued, but easily traced.

75. March 1, 1779. The middle Hubbardston road, running from Adams' (now Knowler's) corner, southward by where James Sawin, Jr., formerly lived, to the town line.

76. March, 1, 1779. This highway ran from the house of the late Ivers Ray westward, near the Elisha Pierce place, to Gardner line. Its course may be traced, but many years ago it gave way to the present one more favorably located.

77. March 6, 1780. Isaac Blodgett lived on lot No. 90, second division, on the south side of the river, near South Ashburnham. This road led from near the Noah May place to his house.

78. March 6, 1780. Extended from the homestead formerly owned by Joshua Moore, southward by the Ivers Ray place to the old county road south of Livermore Hill. It probably was in part a relaying of No. 41.

79. March 5, 1781. Passed from Gardner road, by the place now occupied by Lyman Drury, formerly by Samuel Gates, in a northeast direction to the Winchendon road. Still seen, with two old cellar holes near it.

80. March 3, 1783. The so-called Minott road in the southwest part of the town.

81. March 7, 1785. This road ran from the old Joseph Beard place in the west part of the town, southwardly, near the Oxford place, to the old county road. Long since discontinued.

82. March 7, 1785. From the last road west into Gardner. A modification, perhaps, of a part of No. 76.

83. March 6, 1786. From the Fitchburg line, near J. P. Roper's, by the Bacon house, up the valley to the old sawmill site, mostly as the road now runs, with a branch over the bridge to the Levi Warner place. A relocation, in part, of a former road.

84. May 11, 1786. Was the road through Wachusettville, extending as far east as the present residence of Samuel H. Sprague, the place being then owned by Asa Farnsworth. It originally came out to the previously built highway near the late Edward R. Carter's, but was changed to its present location in 1791.

85. March 5, 1787. The road from the Knowler homestead westward towards Cedar Swamp.

86. March 3, 1788. From old Eaton place, north of the present Nathaniel Eaton's, westwardly to No. 78.

87. March 5, 1789. A relocation of No. 77, and extension to the line of Ashburnham.

88. December, 1791. A county road was laid from Ashburnham to Ward's mills, Fitchburg, running through Scrabble Hollow and in the rear of the Murdock place (John P. Roper's), as now existing.

89. March 12, 1792. An extension of the Wachusettville road, No. 84, from where Mr. Sprague lives to old county road below the present residence of Daniel E. Hurd.

90. March 18, 1793. A relaying of the road westward from the Knowler homestead, and its extension through Cedar Swamp by the former residence of Daniel Sawin, Jr., to the Minott place. Also a branch from the residences of Abner and Daniel Sawin, Sr., to the Minott road, No. 80. Whence it appears that the road as first laid did not pass, as now, by these residences, but direct from Daniel Sawin, Jr.'s, to Mr. Minott's,—this direct line at a later date (1798) being superseded by the present one.

91. March 19, 1798. This was the present existing highway running from Beech Hill (the Divol place) by the May house (Charles H. Smith's) to Scrabble Hollow.

92. March 19, 1798. Substantially the present highway from the Beech Hill schoolhouse to the Winchendon road, built to supersede an old one running further northwest which was given up.

93. March 18, 1799. A road was laid from the lower part of what is now





Wachusettville, in a southeasterly direction, to the old town line, for the benefit of Mr. Noah Wiswall, then recently received to Westminster with his estate from Fitchburg (as was supposed).

94. March 18, 1799. From Calvin Whitney's to the former dwelling of Reed Merriam, now owned by W. J. Black.

95. June, 1800. Fifth Massachusetts turnpike, extending from Lancaster to Athol, was chartered by the Legislature and built through the Central village of the town. Fuller description later on.

96. May 4, 1801. Road for Jonathan Smith in the north part of the town, running from his house, the former residence of John S. Hadley, to the meetinghouse road over Bean Porridge Hill.

97. April 5, 1802. A connecting link between the old county road to Athol and the new turnpike, meeting the latter, probably, a few rods west of the Oxford place. A cart-path indicates its location to-day.

98. Oct. 21, 1802. A branch leaving the present road to South Gardner at Nathaniel Eaton's, and running northwesterly till it connected with a previously existing road, No. 82.

99. August 26, 1803. This road extended from Scrabble Hollow westerly by the C. H. Smith place to Gardner line, near the former residence of Amos P. Spaulding, then occupied by John Dunn. The easterly portion of it was a relocation of a part of the Beech Hill and Scrabble Hollow road, No. 91.

100. Oct. 24, 1803. The present highway from the former Ivers Ray place southward to the so-called Beard road to Gardner, No. 98.

At a town meeting held on the date just named, Oct. 24, 1803, it was voted "to take some measures to ascertain the bounds of town roads and establish the same," and the selectmen were authorized to carry that vote into effect. The result of this action was the relocation of all the pre-existing public highways, and the laying of a few new ones, by Matthias Mosman, an experienced and skilful surveyor, who had recently come into the place from Ashburnham. The work was done during the two following years, the detailed records of which, including courses and distances, never before given, are to be found in the "Road Book" still in charge of the town clerk. This reconstruction of the road system of the town involved the discontinuance of several old highways which had been rendered superfluous by the opening of new and more convenient lines of travel; the chiefest thoroughfare so discontinued being a considerable part of that section of the original Lancaster and Athol county road, No. 24, lying between the Bigelow Mill site and South Gardner.

Under the rearrangement of Mr. Mosman, the hundred highways previously laid out and built, together with a few newly projected ones, were reduced to a comprehensive system consisting of thirty-eight distinct lines of intercommunication, intelligently located, numbered, and named, for the convenience of all concerned. It is not deemed needful to present the classification in these pages. From this point the tabulation, briefly interrupted for reasons sufficiently apparent, will proceed on the same lines as before.

101. September, 1805. The North Branch turnpike through Scrabble Hollow, to be noticed more fully later on.





102. Oct. 21, 1805. The Dunn and Wetherbee road, so-called, running from the Beech Hill schoolhouse northward to Gardner line, near the former residence of Amos P. Spaulding.

103. Oct. 21, 1805. From the last road, near the Joseph Seaver place, westward to Gardner line. A relocation of No. 52.

104. March 3, 1806. The westerly Hubbardston road, extending southwest from Widow Norman Seaver's to the boundary of the town.

105. May 9, 1808. From North Common to Winship road, by the present dwelling of George W. Whitney.

106. Oct. 10, 1810. Extending from the former John G. Hadley place, near Phillips' brook, northward to county road below where James H. Laws now resides.

107. Nov. 2, 1812. In the extreme north part of the town, a relocation and extension of No. 68.

For many years subsequent to the last date no roads of importance were built. Two or three new ones of inconsiderable length connected with the county road to Winchendon are reported, but can not be located with certainty. Many alterations were made, but not such as to change materially the old routes.

108. September, 1828. A county road from Fitchburg to Ashburnham was laid out, running along the Phillips' Brook valley in the north part of the town, essentially as now located.

109. June, 1829. A county road from Westminster to Royalston was ordered, running through Gardner Center. It is what is known as the new road to Gardner. Most of its course in Westminster was over pre-existing lines.

110. May 3, 1830. A road was laid out from the southern terminus of the Brooks and Cutter road, No. 107, down the hill to the new valley road. This superseded No. 106, which was accordingly discontinued.

111. May 12, 1834. This was essentially a relaying of the southwest-erly part of No. 91, which had been given up some years before.

112. June, 1834. A county road from Templeton to Fitchburg was laid, running from South Gardner into the village, branching from the old turnpike opposite where the bakery is now located and following the present route north of the Town Meadow reservoir, past Caleb S. Merriam's dwelling, to the town line.

113. June, 1834. A corresponding county road, leaving the last above the reservoir named, and running south of it through Wachusettville to the town line on its course to Leominster, its eastern terminus.

114. June, 1834. This was a county road, leaving the old one opposite the foot of Meetinghouse Pond and passing along the easterly side of the hill to the turnpike, near the slaughter house of Edward B. Lynde.

115. May 15, 1837. In the north part, extending from old town way below P. F. Page's to county road in Phillips' Brook valley. The "Potato road."

116. Nov. 23, 1840. Extending from near the George Miles place northerly to the old proprietors' road at Mt. Pleasant cemetery.

117. June, 1840. County road to Templeton relaid, running around Livermore Hill.

118. April 5, 1841. A private way from the residence of the late Cephas Bush to Princeton road made public.

119. Dec. 1, 1845. Running from the residence of Samuel W. Bridge to the Calvin Baker place. Mostly new, superseding the former road.

120. Sept. 20, 1847. Depot road from Fitchburg highway.

121. April 5, 1849. Short street from Main, opposite hotel.



122. Sept. 22, 1849. From Bacon Street, opposite blacksmith's shop, to Fitchburg road. Pleasant Street.

123. April 1, 1850. This road ran from near the old No. 4 schoolhouse site, below George Harris' residence, southward to Wachusettville. An old private way made public.

124. Nov. 10, 1851. Town way from railroad station northwardly to the old North Branch turnpike.

125. April 5, 1852. From Fitchburg road, near the railroad station, southwardly to Wachusettville.

126. Sept. 18, 1852. A short branch of Leominster road in the south-east part of the "No-town" addition.

127. June, 1856. County road in Wachusettville from main road to Harrison Wyman's.

128. April 6, 1857. From South Westminster to the George Miles corner,—the old way to the residence of the late Mr. Fowler being abandoned.

129. May 1, 1857. From Bacon Street, opposite the house of John Lewis, to the Fitchburg road.

130. May 9, 1859. The William Eaton road from Main Street near Nichols Bros.' factory.

131. June, 1859. County road from Wachusettville (Benjamin Wyman's) southeastwardly through "No-town" territory towards East Princeton.

132. Oct. 12, 1861. Short line from the last to John Cary's house.

133. Nov. 3, 1863. Cross road from turnpike, near Clarendon Oxford's, northward to back road to Gardner.

134. Nov. 3, 1863. Short route from South Westminster to John Sawin's.

135. March, 1865. A county road running from Osborne's mills (so called) in Fitchburg to No. 131.

136. May 27, 1867. The South Westminster street from the Center along the border of the pond.

137. September, 1869. County road, from where Benjamin Howe then resided, in the west part of the town, to South Gardner.

138. June, 1872. County road from South Westminster in a southwest-erly direction down the "Mare Meadow" valley to Hubbardston line.

139. Nov. 7, 1876. Highway opened from the railroad station north- westerly to the Bathrick place. Partly on the line of an old road, No. 46, for a long time abandoned.

140. May 10, 1884. Short piece from railroad station to the Fitchburg road, east of the track.

141. March 7, 1887. Town voted to accept a road leading from the foot of the hill below house of Albert Howard to the house of F. F. Rice— Thomas Merriam place.

142. Nov. 6, 1888. Short road accepted from near the house of A. F. Green, on Winchendon road, to that of Susan H. Underwood.

143. March 4, 1889. From near house of Mrs. W. O. Eager, Wachu- settville, southwardly to old road near E. Eliot Wood's. Soon after ex- tended from Mr. Peeler's (J. C. Miller place) to outlet of Wachusett Lake.

144. June 3, 1889. County road from S. W. Weston's, near Wachusett lake, southwardly up the mountain side to town line.

145. Nov. 5, 1889. A short road beginning opposite the last at Wachu- settville and running northwardly across the river.

**Bridle Ways.** It is altogether probable that many of the early highways of the town, previous to the time of their being legally laid out and accepted as public thoroughfares, were simple bypaths or cart-roads, cut through the woods wherever convenience or necessity required. And for many years after they became public property not a few of them remained much as they had been before, little labor or money being expended upon





them and little being done to render them more passable and easy of travel. Besides these private roadways or imperfectly constructed public ones, there was a class of thoroughfares in the olden time, over which the town had a certain control, known as *bridle ways*. They ran through open fields and pastures, which were protected from intrusion by gates wherever they were needed for that purpose. Some of these were for a time common roads. Such, for instance, was that running over the easterly part of Bean Porridge Hill, No. 44, as was also the Isaac Blodget road and its extension, Nos. 77 and 87. The Wiswall road, No. 93, was for a time a bridle way. Others existed in different parts of the town. These were required to be kept open to whomsoever might be pleased to travel them, though it does not appear that they were in any respect a public charge.

**Bridges.** No special mention of bridges is found in the town records until the year 1767. From this fact it is to be inferred that up to that date the streams were either forded, as no doubt they were in many cases, or crossed by cheap, rude structures composed of logs, which were plenty in those days, hewn or split it may be, and put in place with their level surfaces uppermost as a part of the work of making the thoroughfares to which they respectively belonged. It is to be presumed that there were, properly speaking, no abutments on either side to support the extremities of these improvised bridges, but that the ends of the logs were simply imbedded in the earth in such a way as to render them practically serviceable for purposes of travel and transportation.

But the time came when it was necessary, in certain localities at least, that more permanent facilities for crossing the water courses should be constructed, and constructed according to some definite and systematic method. To do this, larger outlays of money were required than had before been made, and special appropriations, independent of the regular grant for highway purposes, were voted for that particular department of public work.

**Dr. Harvey's Bridge.** In the year just named, at a meeting held October 15th, pursuant to an article in the warrant, it was voted "to Build a Bridge over the River at Doctor Harvey's mill [which had recently been built near the present residence of S. M. Brown]," and "to Raise twenty pounds to accomplish the business aforesaid." A committee was chosen to have charge of the work in hand and ordered to "make the Roade Leading to said Bridge from James Taylor's [afterwards called the 'Mill Road'] passable as far as they think Necessary." Men from the town at large were expected to assist in the undertaking, and it was voted "that each person that Laboreth att the Bridge and Roade have two shillings per Day if they Begin their Labour at 8 o'clock in the morning and End att 4



o'clock in the Afternoone." The bridge was completed in 1770, and continued in use about twenty-six years, when it was rebuilt by Mr. Joseph Taylor, at that time owner of the mill property; the details of its construction, as recommended by a committee and approved by the town, being given in the records of the clerk.

In 1814 this bridge again needing repair was referred to a committee, who reported that if the mill which had then recently been burned was not rebuilt, the bridge was "wholly unnecessary," and that if it were, the bridge would be of "very little use to any one but the owner of the mill," and recommended that but "little be expended upon it by the town," which report and recommendation were accepted and work seems to have been done upon it accordingly. Ten years later further repairs were needed (the mill having been rebuilt meanwhile), and the selectmen were directed to act in the matter as "they think expedient." A few years afterwards the second mill having been destroyed by fire, the road leading to this bridge was discontinued and the structure has been kept in order, for the most part, since, by those whose convenience it has served, with very little expense to the public.

**Phillips' Brook Bridge.** Singular as it may seem, the next bridge receiving special action on the part of the town was that over what was then called "the most northerly river." In 1764 a highway was laid across that stream, but nothing was done in regard to a bridge till Oct. 30, 1769, when it was voted "to build a bridge" there, and, to secure the execution of the work provided for, it was voted "that Each Surveyor for the present year take four hands out of his List and goe over and assist in makeing said Bridge." For some unexplained reason the bridge was not constructed at the time designated, but three years later it was taken hold of and completed substantially in the manner proposed before. In 1787 an attempt was made to have the structure rebuilt, but it proved ineffectual. A dozen years later Mr. Solomon Laws was empowered to put the bridge in proper order and the selectmen were instructed to pay him accordingly.

**Whitman's Bridge.** No action of the citizens ordering the original construction of the bridge at Scrabble Hollow is recorded in the books of the town clerk. But on the 7th of November, 1770, it was voted "that the Bridge leading to Mr. Shattucks place [on Bragg Hill] be Covered with Splitt plank two inches thick or Sawed plank two and half inches thick," which indicates the date when it was completed. In 1791 it had become so much dilapidated that a new one was ordered by vote of the town and let out for building to Ephraim Wetherbee. It was a substantial structure with well-laid stone abutments fifteen feet wide, which have probably served the public to the present day, the sleepers and flooring only needing to be replaced from time to time as occasion has required.





**The Middle Bridge.** Such was the name applied for many years to the structure that spanned the same stream a mile below on the roadway to Bean Porridge Hill. It was built and rebuilt simultaneously with the last-named, the same vote of the town relating to both the first and second construction of them, covering the two cases, which were similar in all essential respects.

**Murdock's Bridge.** When the first bridge across the river below the railroad station was built, has not been determined. On the 2d of October, 1794, a committee, previously chosen to consider the subject of repairing the old bridge or building a new one, reported that a new one should be erected, giving in full the details of its construction. The report was accepted and the selectmen were instructed to let out the work to the lowest bidder at public auction, which was done on the 3d of November following,—the stone work being performed by William Edgell, Jr., for £14 11s., and the wooden material being furnished and laid by Zachariah Rand for £2 4s. This bridge, with occasional replanking and other incidental repairs, served its designed purpose till 1834, when, upon the building of the county road to Fitchburg, it was superseded by the structure now standing.

**Darby's Bridge.** This bridge across the eastwardly outlet of Meetinghouse Pond, at the old gristmill site, was first erected, undoubtedly, by Seth Walker, in 1741, when he built the mill, and was probably regarded as a part of the original mill enterprise, the dam constituting the roadway with which the bridge was connected. In 1771 the town voted "that the surveyor who has charge of that bridge, with Captain Dike and his squadron make such improvements upon it as they shall Judge proper and necessary." On the 12th of May, 1796, a committee, to which the matter of repairing and improving this bridge had been referred, made a detailed report of what ought to be done with it and the connected dam, involving the rebuilding of a considerable part of the structure. The report was accepted, and it is presumed that the suggestions it contained were carried into effect, giving to the town and the traveling public essentially the one now in use. It is probable that the broad stone covering, which for more than fifty years has constituted the bed of the road at that point, was put in at a later date. If so, the fact, so far as ascertained, did not find a place in the records.

The other bridges of the town, with two or three exceptions not necessary to note, have been constructed and kept in repair under the general system of highway management, and the expense of them has been met out of the regular annual grant for highway purposes.

**Appropriations.** As previously stated, the first appropriation made for public roads was in 1740, when £10 were





devoted to this important interest. In 1750 a special highway tax was levied which amounted to a little less than £50, or about \$160. The first appropriation after the town was incorporated, made at the March meeting in 1760, was £30. To indicate the general course of the town's action in this matter, the amount assigned at each decade, from that date to the present, is appended: 1770, £80; 1780, £2500 in greatly depreciated currency, the actual value being about £140; 1790, £150; 1800, \$1100; 1810, \$1200; 1820, \$1000; 1830, \$1200; 1840, \$1200; 1850, \$1200; 1860, \$1500; 1870, \$3000; 1880, \$2500; 1890, \$3200.

**Superintendence.** During the existence of Narragansett No. 2, the highways were in charge of committees chosen from time to time, as the proprietors deemed advisable. Under the act of incorporation the legally required custom of appointing annually a board of highway surveyors was adopted, and continued in use for more than a hundred years. The roads of the township were divided into districts, over each of which one of these surveyors was put in charge, the boundaries of his jurisdiction being assigned to him by rescript from the selectmen, though the town had a voice in fixing those boundaries. At the outset, in 1760, there were six of those districts and, of course, six surveyors. As the roads of the town multiplied, the number of both districts and surveyors increased proportionally. In the year 1800 there were fifteen of them; in 1852, twenty-five, and the same number in 1866.

In 1867 the experiment of having the selectmen elect a general superintendent of roads and bridges, with power to appoint subordinates in different localities, was tried, but, not proving satisfactory, was discontinued at the end of the year. In 1872 a board of three road commissioners was chosen at the annual meeting to look after the interest under notice, and this plan was pursued for seven years, when the original method of having highway surveyors, with an assignment to each of a definite extent of roads, was resumed, and was followed as the policy of the town till 1889, when all the public highways, bridges, etc., were put in charge of a road commissioner appointed by the selectmen, as required by a new law of the State. The entire length of the public roads of Westminster at the present time, including those built under county authority, is about one hundred and twenty-five miles.

**The Fifth Massachusetts Turnpike.** Near the close of the last century, the custom of forming private companies for the purpose of constructing important thoroughfares was inaugurated in the State of Massachusetts, and prevailed quite extensively for many years, or until the multiplicity and excellence of the public highways compelled its abandonment for lack of needful pecuniary support. These companies operated under an act of the Legislature, which, while fixing in a general



way the location of their respective roads, gave them power to raise money for the construction and maintenance of the same by establishing tollhouses along their routes, whereat to demand and collect given fees of those using the franchise for purposes of travel or transportation. Such thoroughfares were called turnpikes—a name derived from the swinging bar or gate set up at the tollhouses in order to detain passers-by till the stipulated sum was paid. Among the enterprises receiving a charter under this policy, at or about the date designated, was the so-called "Fifth Massachusetts Turnpike," its name indicating the place it held in the series of similar undertakings that extended over a large part of the Commonwealth. The eastern terminus of this road was "Jonas Kendall's tavern, Leominster," and it ran thence "through Westminster, [South] Gardner, Templeton, Phillipston, Athol, Orange, and Warwick, to Capt. Elisha Hunts in Northfield," with a branch "from Athol through Montague to Calvin Munn's tavern Greenfield." The corporation under whose auspices the road was built, was composed of gentlemen of influence and wealth residing in the different towns along the route, who acted under authority derived from the Legislature March 1, 1799. Their charter provided for the construction of "a highway four rods wide, the path to be travelled not less than eighteen feet wide in any place," and for "the erection of five turnpike gates convenient for collecting the toll." Fortunately for the inhabitants of Westminster, no one of these gates was located within the boundaries of the town, which enabled them to use all the facilities for travel and transportation furnished by the corporation on their own territory, free of all cost.

This was the original of the present direct route from the center of Westminster to South Gardner. As first located, the road ran over Meetinghouse Hill, thence partly down the declivity below Hobart Raymond's barn, following the course of the former highway through the cemetery and on past George Harris' and the Dupee dwelling to the town line. The following year, however, the latter part of the route was changed, diverging from the main street of the village at the Bradbury store, and proceeding, by the present well-known track, in an almost straight course north of the cemetery till it struck the former survey a little way beyond. This road was a great improvement on what had previously existed as a means of communication with the towns lying both eastward and westward, being very direct and well-graded, and formed for many years the principal thoroughfare between Greenfield, Brattleboro', Albany, and other places in that direction, and Boston. Moreover, it gave to Westminster an importance it never had before, stimulating business enterprise, and making it a center of travel and trade, which conduced largely to the growth of the village and to the general prosperity of the community at large.

The first of these is the fact that the United States is a young nation, and its history is therefore a history of growth and development. The second is the fact that the United States is a large nation, and its history is therefore a history of expansion and conquest. The third is the fact that the United States is a diverse nation, and its history is therefore a history of conflict and compromise. The fourth is the fact that the United States is a nation of immigrants, and its history is therefore a history of assimilation and adaptation. The fifth is the fact that the United States is a nation of pioneers, and its history is therefore a history of exploration and discovery. The sixth is the fact that the United States is a nation of entrepreneurs, and its history is therefore a history of innovation and invention. The seventh is the fact that the United States is a nation of reformers, and its history is therefore a history of social and political change. The eighth is the fact that the United States is a nation of idealists, and its history is therefore a history of high aspirations and noble goals. The ninth is the fact that the United States is a nation of pragmatists, and its history is therefore a history of practical solutions and realistic policies. The tenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of optimists, and its history is therefore a history of hope and faith in the future.



In September, 1805, a branch of this road was laid, leaving the main line in the neighborhood of the Osborne Mills, Fitchburg, and running to the eastward of John F. Roper's, by a still open way, through Scrabble Hollow and South Ashburnham to Winchendon, its western terminus. This was known as the North Branch Turnpike. In June, 1829, the corporation, under whose auspices the turnpike had been built and operated, transferred its interest in this branch to the County of Worcester, and in December, 1832, did the same with the main line; whereupon, having finished the work it was chartered to do, it dissolved.

**Railways.** Although railways have not played a very important part in developing the resources or shaping the fortunes of this town, yet have they engaged the attention of the people at different times and enlisted their interest to a sufficient extent to claim some consideration in a review like that to which these pages are devoted. The era of the steam engine, as a means of locomotion, opened in this country about the year 1830. A few carefully graded roads with iron tracks had been previously projected and operated by horse power with considerable success, but it was not till the date named that the idea of the iron steed, as a motor for the transportation of men and merchandise, took possession of the minds or entered into the calculations of the business world. But that idea once entertained, and its feasibility once tested by actual experiment, it grew into favor with wonderful speed. A few years only were required to give it commanding position and make it one of the most important factors in modern life.

In 1830 the first railroad to be operated by steam power was chartered by the Legislature of Massachusetts. In 1840 seven such enterprises were in the full tide of successful experiment,—the great problem of their practicability, usefulness, and value settled beyond all question or peradventure. The Fitchburg road was chartered in 1843. As work upon it proceeded towards completion, a project was started looking to its extension, under the same or another name, westward to the valley of the Connecticut. The prime mover in this new enterprise was Alvah Crocker of Fitchburg, a prominent citizen of that town, largely associated with its industrial development and somewhat known to the general public; at a later day a member of Congress from the Representative district to which he belonged. Thoroughly interested in it himself, he secured, by personal influence and appeal, the sympathy and co-operation of a goodly number of his responsible fellow-citizens, and then visited the towns along the proposed route, holding meetings and interviewing leading men in them for the purpose of calling attention to the matter, awakening public feeling, and obtaining at last the pecuniary assistance requisite to the accomplishment of the end in view. All this was done under the assumption that the contemplated road was to run through these several



towns by a course that would render it of great advantage to them, not only as a means of free and rapid transit to and from other localities, but in the way of stimulating enterprise and industrial undertakings by furnishing needful facilities for easy and cheap transportation of material and manufactured goods.

Westminster was one of the places in which Mr. Crocker sought aid for his proposed scheme, nor did he seek in vain. Numerous subscriptions were made to its capital stock, but with the expectation that the road would go through or near the "Narrows," then so called, and also the "village," — localities which would be greatly benefited by it and which, as business centers, would render it of great benefit to the public generally. Much to the surprise of those who had pledged money to the project, it was found, as time went on, and as the undertaking began to crystallize into definite and final shape, that it was the purpose of its managers to have the road established not where the former had supposed it was to be, and where they and the people at large desired it to be, but in quite another direction, where it would be of comparatively little value, either as a means of travel and transportation, or as a factor in the prosperity and growth of the town.

In order to thwart, if possible, this purpose and secure the construction of the road where it was wanted, a committee consisting of Joseph Whitman, Benjamin Wyman, and Manasseh S. Forbush, was chosen at a town meeting held April 7, 1845, to obtain statistics and take such other action as might be deemed useful in promoting the end in view. This committee was greatly aided in the discharge of the duty assigned it by the Hon. Charles Hudson, then a resident of the town, who was indefatigable in his efforts to have the railway so located as to meet the general wishes of the citizens, and serve the best interests of the community. But all was in vain. Mr. Crocker had his plans too well laid, and was fortified by too strong pecuniary and other support, to be turned from his course by all the influence Westminster could bring to bear against him, and the road was built accordingly where it was not wanted, and where, as was prophesied, it has done little or nothing to stimulate enterprise, encourage manufacturing or other industrial undertakings, or promote the financial and business welfare.

Finding themselves out-generated or out-voted in this direction, and indignant at what they deemed the injustice and deceit which had been practiced upon them, the citizens sought redress by a counter movement in their own behalf. At a meeting held Dec. 16, 1845, Joseph Whitman, Benjamin Wyman, and William S. Bradbury were chosen a committee "to make such surveys as they may deem expedient for a Rail Road from some point on the Nashua and Worcester Rail Road to some point on the Vermont and Massachusetts Rail Road, and





that they be authorized to expend a sum not exceeding three hundred dollars to be appropriated out of the town Treasury." This project, however, did not prove feasible, and was therefore abandoned at an early day.

As the Vermont and Massachusetts Railroad approached completion, the question of the location of the depot became a matter of general interest. Two sites were suggested; one where it now stands, "near the Wood place," the other at the so-called "Monroe crossing," above Scrabble Hollow. At first, there was a considerable number of citizens in favor of each place. As a compromise, a proposition to have two stations was submitted at a meeting held Aug. 19, 1846, but was voted down, though not by a large majority. At the same meeting "it was voted to locate the Depot at or near the Wood place, so called, by 96 to 80 votes." The smallness of the majority was not satisfactory to many persons, who desiring more decisive action caused the matter to be brought up again at a legal meeting held ten days later, when the citizens designated their choice very emphatically and conclusively, 156 votes being cast for the site now occupied and only one for the more northerly one. Subsequent events have proved the wisdom of this determination. There can be no doubt that it is the most convenient and satisfactory location on the line of the road as it now runs, within the limits of the town.

Several attempts since that date have been made to supply the inhabitants with better railroad facilities, but thus far they have been without avail. In 1869 Joel Merriam, an active and influential citizen, with sundry other persons, proffered a petition to the General Court asking for a charter for a road "from Gardner to tide water at or near Boston," and at the March meeting of that year the selectmen were constituted a committee "to send in a petition to the Legislature in aid of the Petition of Joel Merriam and others." A committee was also chosen to cause the necessary survey for the proposed road to be made. Failing to obtain the desired charter, the town, on the 26th of April, caused a committee of three to be appointed "to consult the Officers of the Vt. and Mass. Rail Road Corporation in reference to straightening said Rail Road through the town." Nothing appears to have come of this action and the matter rested for four and a half years, when, on the 4th of November, 1873, a committee of five was chosen by the town "to take into consideration the subject of a Rail Road from Pratt's Junction through this town to intersect with the Vt. and Mass. road at or near Gardner." This project, though deemed feasible, involved too great expense to justify, under existing circumstances, any further efforts towards carrying it into execution, and it was therefore given up. Quite recently, interested parties have devised a scheme for furnishing desirable railroad accommodations to the leading manufacturing estab-





lishments of the place, by offering inducements to the Fitchburg corporation, now in possession of the Vermont and Massachusetts franchise, to run a spur from the main line at Gardner to the central village, with a view of extending it ultimately to South Westminster, but as yet it has not secured the confidence and co-operation of the citizens at large to such an extent as to give much hope of its becoming, at a very early day, an accomplished fact. According to present indications, the industrial interests of Westminster and the people generally will be obliged to content themselves with the facilities and privileges now enjoyed in this behalf, awaiting, in patient expectation, the time when some new enterprise within or without its boundaries shall take hold of the matter and carry it to a successful issue; or when some existing corporation, watchful of opportunities for occupying new and profitable territory, shall see it to be for its interest to extend its tracks through this good old township and in that way supply a need and gratify a desire long existing, but existing thus far only to be postponed to "a more convenient season."



## CHAPTER XIII.

### EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

THE COMMON SCHOOLS—WESTMINSTER ACADEMY—LIBRARIES—  
LYCEUMS, DEBATING CLUBS, ETC.

To the fathers and founders of New England, education was a paramount and fundamental concern. So thoroughly persuaded were they of its essential value as a handmaid of religion, as a factor in the development of social and individual life and character, and as a condition of human welfare and happiness, that they built in hackneyed phrase "the school-house beside the church," in order that together these two institutions might help to mold and shape to fine and noble issues the new civilization they hoped to establish as a perpetual heritage upon these newly occupied shores. Scarcely had they gained a foothold here,—while yet engaged in felling forests, erecting log-cabins, planting orchards, and bringing the virgin fields into a state of productiveness for the supply of their more immediately pressing bodily wants, they began to make provision for the proper training of the intellectual faculties of children and youth, and the needful storing of their minds with the rudiments of useful knowledge. As time went on and resources of various kinds increased, they enlarged their facilities for private and public instruction and made more accessible and more sure the means of popular education. "To the end that learning may not be buried in the graves of our fathers," they said through their legislative representatives, "it is ordered that every township in this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of fifty householders, shall then forthwith appoint one of their town to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read, &c." "And it is further ordered that when any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families or householders, they shall set up a grammar school, the master thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the University," which had been previously established under the same inspiration. This occurred during the first generation of the settlement at Plymouth. It was the casting into congenial soil the mustard seed, which, though exceedingly small, was yet, in the providence of God and under the fostering care of men, to grow into one of the largest of trees, beneath whose grateful, invigorating shade generations and ages





to come, irrespective of race or sex, were to find rest and refreshing, inspiration and delight.

The spirit and purpose of the parents, thus displayed, animated and controlled their children. The early settlers of Westminster were not far removed by lineage from the founders of the public school system of Massachusetts, and they followed closely in the footsteps of those who had gone before them, in this behalf. Not that they began at once upon arriving here to build a schoolhouse, as they did to build a meeting-house, but that in due time the former, under their wise direction, took its place literally beside the latter, becoming a permanently established and universally recognized institution of the community, to be sacredly maintained and fostered by themselves and their descendants as long as the town should stand.

Nothing appears in the records of the proprietors of Narragansett No. 2 to show that anything was attempted in the way of providing for the public instruction of the young in the growing settlement, for nearly fifteen years after it was first started. This can easily be accounted for, and in no wise impugns the motives or the conduct of those concerned in relation to this indispensable interest of human society. It can be readily understood how exclusively at the outset the time, the thought, the energy of the first-comers here were occupied in securing for themselves and their dependents a place of shelter, and the absolute necessities of physical existence. These things, with the provision they made for the public worship of God and the regular preaching of the divine word, precluded the possibility of their doing much beside, however urgent other claims might be. Moreover, as a matter of fact, there were for a number of years very few children on the premises. The earliest permanent settlers had sons and daughters, but they were far grown towards maturity. Those arriving later were mostly newly-married couples—the husbands, perhaps, coming here to begin with as single men, to clear a few acres and get them into a tillable condition, build a rude dwelling, and then going back to some one of the lower towns for a bride to share with them the trying, uncertain fortunes of domestic life, the fires of which were first kindled upon the new-laid hearthstone before the new-built altar of conjugal devotion and loyalty. Probably there were not twenty, perhaps not a dozen, children of school-going age in the entire township when the first proposition to start a public school was brought forward. And these were so widely scattered as to render it impracticable, not to say impossible, to bring them together, day after day from their homes, for any purpose whatsoever. And it can be easily seen that thus conditioned, with few roads, or pathways even, through the wilderness, and the liability of attack from wild beasts, and from Indians as well, the establishing of a



school was, for many years, entirely out of the question. Nevertheless, schools were among things that were to be, when the proper time arrived.

**The Common Schools.** The first movement looking to that result took place in 1751. In an advertisement for a meeting of the proprietors to be held Dec. 4th, was an article

"9. To see if ye props will agree to keep a Reading and writing School this year or any part of it."

Whereupon it was

"*Voted* to dismiss the ninth Article in ye Advertisement."

Two years later the matter came up again in substantially the same form, with the same result, and there it rested till after the incorporation of the township was effected. At the second meeting of the legal voters of the district of Westminster, held Dec. 24, 1759, one item of business was

"To see if they will agree to have a Reading and Riting School and to grant Money for the same."

Upon this article it was

"*Voted* that they will have a Reading and Riting Schoole for three months in the middle of the town.

"*Voted* that £6 be assessed and levied on the inhabitants of the District of Westminster for the use of the Schoole in S<sup>d</sup> District."

Of what was done in the way of carrying these votes into effect, nothing is known. If a school was started, as was probably the case, no record of it can now be found. On the 2d of March, 1761, a little more than a year afterward, upon the proposition "to see If they will have a Schoole and wheather they will have It Kept in Several Parts of the town and to Grant money for the Same," it was "voted that Eight Pounds be Raised for the support of a Schoole." The result of this vote and all particulars are left to conjecture, as before.

A year later more satisfactory details begin to appear, and a few facts pertaining to the early development of the school system are brought to light. Jan. 27, 1762, it was

"*Voted* to have a mooveing Schoole and voted that the Schoole be kept at Mr. Nathan Parker's house and Mr. Philip Bemises and at Capt. Daniel Hoar's and at Lieut Thomas Stearnses and an Equal Part of the time at each Place."

At a subsequent meeting the same sum as before (£8) was appropriated in support of the school. Still later it was voted that "the Schoole shall be Kept at Deacon Holden's house in case the house can be obtained." Probably this was in place of the "mooveing schoole" previously provided for.



The next year, 1763, the appropriation for a school was increased to £13 6s. 8d., and the same amount was granted in 1764. It was voted this year, April 30th,

"To have a moving schoole the Insuing year" . . . "to Keep it in four places, viz. one Quarter of the time att Mr. Elijah Gibbsses House, one Quarter of the time att Mr. David Bemuses, one Quarter of the time att the parting of the Roades Leading to Deacon Miller's & Insine Graveses Houses if a Schoole House is provided, and one Quarter of the time att the parting of the Roades Leading to Capt. Hoar's & Insine Wodwerds Houses or as near their as they can agree and as Near the other places as may be if that we Cant obtaine to Keep it att S<sup>d</sup> places."

At the annual March meeting in 1765, the same sum was voted as the year before, and it was also

"Voted that the Schoole be Kept in the Same manner and places as agreed on Last year.

"May 26, 1766. Voted and Granted twenty pounds to Keepe the Schoole the present year.

"Voted to Keep a Schoole five months in the town this present year according to Law. S<sup>d</sup> Schoole to be kept in the winter Season, and Voted that a Woman's Schoole be Kept Seven months in the out Skirts of the town."

On the 22d of September this action was so far modified as to provide for keeping "a Reading and writeing School Steadly this present year," and "a moving school in four places" — "att Mr. David Bemuses House," "at Mr. Joseph Horsley's House," "att Mr. Insine Woodward's house," and "att Lieut. Rand's house, one-quarter of the time at each place."

At the same meeting it was furthermore voted "to Build one School House," and "to Build it att the pound [near where Hobart Raymond's barn stands]." "Chose messirs David Bemus, Lieut. Sam<sup>l</sup> Whitney and Stephen Holden a Committee to Build the Schoolehouse." "Chose Mr. Stephen Holden Lieut. Whitney and Mr. Josiah Cutting to provid a Schoole-master."

The next month the location of the schoolhouse was changed to "the North-east corner of the meeting house Spott by the corner of Deacon Holden's Land [a little west of where Mr. G. S. Ham now resides]," and there it was finally erected. In providing for this, the first educational establishment in the town, it was

"Voted to build it twenty feet Square one Storey high and five windows in it twelve Squares in each window 7 by 9 the Chimby att one Corner and Brick chimby — the Lore flore Duble and Chamber flore single, the outsid Bordered & the Ruf well Shingled a Duble Dore well hanged; the Sills sett twelve inches from the ground and well under pined with good stones and Sealed with good Bords in the inside & to be Eight feet Between Joynts — the Chimby to be four Bricks & half Deep James & three feet & half Back.

"Voted that Abner Holden Build the Schoole house according to the above Dimentions for £16 5s. Lawful money and to be done by the first of June next."









Concord, one of the early proprietors of the township, and the grandfather of Senator George F. Hoar of Worcester.

At this point appears the original movement in the direction of establishing a school district system for the township. Pursuant to an article in the warrant calling the meeting at the last-named date, it was

"Voted [that] the Schoole be Kept in the several Parts of the Destrict viz. Voted the middle Squaderon Extend one mile and a Quarter as the Roades goe from the Schoolehouse Each way—Voted, that Mr. Joseph Horseley's House [on the estate now owned by Dr. Liverpool] be the Senter of the South Squaderon and then Voted that Mr. Nathan Howard [who lived on the recent Thomas Merriam place] be the Senter of the Northeast Squaderon to [keep] Schoole in; Voted to Reconsider the vote with Respect to Keeping Schoole att Mr. Horsleys and Voted to Keep it att Capt. Dikes House [near No. 3 schoolhouse] and Voted that the fourth Squaderon be att Mr. Josiah Jacksons House [near where Lyman Allen recently lived] and Voted that Each Squaderon have their Equal proportion of the time of Schooling."

At the subsequent May meeting £30 were appropriated for school purposes during the year 1768, and Mr. Samuel Whitney was allowed £3 "for boarding the school-master twelve weeks." Dr. Jeremiah Everett, who had recently come to the place as the first of his profession here, was, on the 15th of December, "allowed £3 14s. 8d. in full of his account while keeping school." No doubt he, in this way, eked out the insufficient pecuniary returns of a limited medical practice.

At the annual meeting held March 6, 1769, in addition to the usual action in respect to a "Moving School," it was voted "that all the Inhabitants that live over the most Northerly River [Phillips' Brook] Draw their proportion of the Schoole money and Spend the same among themselves in Schooling." This privilege was frequently accorded in later years to families in this and other parts of the town, not conveniently located with respect to the regularly established schools.

In the year 1770, March 19th, votes similar to those of 1769 were passed, with the additional provision that "four months time be Spent in Keeping Schoole in the middle of the town from this Day."

Having thus sketched in detail the rise and permanent establishment of the public school system of Westminster, tracing it year by year through the first decade of its existence, and noting the various steps in its early development, it seems necessary to mention only the more important features of its subsequent history,—marked changes that have taken place in its administration, new methods introduced in order to make it more effective, and whatever may have been done otherwise to promote its usefulness and increase its influence as an instrumentality for advancing the interests of sound learning in the community, and for securing the intellectual training of all classes of the people.





At the annual meeting of March 4, 1771, adjourned to the 18th, the length of the public schools was fixed at three months each; the four already indicated following each other in regular succession, and so filling out the entire year. The first was to be "in the middle of the town at the school-house; the second in the east part at Mr. Howard's; the third in the south at Mr. Horseley's; and the fourth in the Northwest at Mr. Jackson's."

The need of buildings for school uses in the outlying portions of the town began to be deeply felt about this time, and the matter of locating and erecting them was becoming an increasingly important public concern. Under an article in the warrant for the annual meeting of 1772, some action was taken upon the subject, but not proving satisfactory was afterwards rescinded. Later in the year, Sept. 7th, the subject came up again, when it was

"Voted to Divid the Inhabitants into five Differant Squaderons and that the Schoole-house be for one Squaderon, and for the South Voted a Schoole-house be sett on the flatt Rock between Capt. Dikes and Hananiah Rand's [on the top of Graves' Hill where the road formerly crossed it] and North-erly a Schoole-house be sett on the flatt Rock below Capt. Rand's Rie field on the Top of the hill comeing from Mr. Cohee's [nearly opposite where Mr. Goodridge now resides] and for the Westward Voted that a Schoole-house be Set att the parting of the Roade by Mr. Nathan Weatherbee's [near the present site of the Beech Hill house] and also Voted to sett the Eastward Schoole-house att the parting of the Roade against Mr. Edmond Bemises house on Mr. Abner Holden's Land near the old well [a few rods southwest of the residence of George Harris, where some tokens of the building may still be seen]. Voted that each Schoole House be built Eighteen feet squire, and that they be built by a Grant of money out of the Town."

Committees were chosen in each district or squadron to have charge of the work of erecting these houses in their several localities, respectively.

At this same meeting it was "voted to Sell all the Schoole lands within the Town [which then consisted of two hundred acres of upland and a meadow lot of some four acres], the money arising by Sale theirof to be Lett out to Intrest for the Benifit of a Schoole." Authority to do this was asked of the General Court and granted. The lands were disposed of and the proceeds invested and used as proposed, the income amounting to about £35 per year.

Dec. 1, 1773. The schoolhouses having been erected agreeably to the votes of the town, the bills for the expense of them were presented by the several committees, accepted, and ordered to be paid. They were of the following amounts: For the one in the south part of the town, £21 9s. 2d.; in the north, £20 12s. 10d.; in the west, £21 15s. 10d. 2f.; and in the east, £21 4s. 8d. 1f.

Up to the year 1775 it was the custom to have the schools in town taught consecutively, thus not only adapting them to



the existing scarcity of teachers, but enabling children to go from one district to another, if it was desired, thereby increasing the amount of schooling received by them.

A change, however, was made in this regard in the year specified. At the annual meeting it was "voted that three Schools be kept at once in Town for the space of five Weeks," and on the 18th of December following, it was furthermore "voted to Keep a plural of Schooles during the winter season," "that four Schooles for Ten weeks Insueing be Kept att each Schoolehouse exclusive of the East Schoolehouse and att the End of the said Tearme, Ten weeks be Kept in the East Schoolehouse," and "that The Schoole in the Senter and att the East Schoolehouse be kept by a Grammer master." In 1777. Jan. 1, it was "voted to Keep Schoole ten weeks in each Schoole-house the Insueing year, and voted, that the Schooles be Kept all att once or as soone as masters can be procured," which shows that only male teachers were employed at that time, though the practice of having females for instructors which had previously prevailed, as already stated, to some extent, was resumed not long after, the different squadrons or districts being allowed by special vote to use a portion of the money assigned them for a "woman school" in the summer season.

Near the opening of the following winter, the town voted "that five Schooles be Sett agoine att once," that "each Quarter provide his own School-master," and that "each Schoole have its Equal proportion of money Exclusive of the most Northerly and Westerly people who may Draw their proportion of Schoole money and Spend it among themselves in Schooling."

The desire for a school building in the extreme west part of the town (now South Gardner) grew very naturally with the increase of population in that direction. For several years in succession the voters were called upon to act upon the question of erecting one there, but with adverse result. At length, on the 18th of January, 1779, the town voted "to build a Schoolehouse in the Westerly part of the town," "and that it shall be set on Mr. William Bickford's Land on the County Road or the Road Leading to Mr. Timothy [Seth] Howard's [Heywood's] House where the major part of the Squaderon shall appoint." The house was erected pursuant to these votes, and was the first schoolhouse within the limits of the present town of Gardner. It stood on South Main Street, as it is called, some fifty rods northwest of the hotel near the dwelling of Mr. Amos B. Minott.

There were now six school divisions or squadrons in the town, among which the school appropriation, after allowing the most northerly people to draw their proportionate share to use as they saw fit, was equally divided. In December, 1779, it was made a requisite that the candidates for teachers should be "approved" by the selectmen before being employed.



During the few years preceding and following the last mentioned date, the northerly portion of the town filled up quite rapidly with settlers, necessitating better facilities and increased accommodations for educational purposes. To supply the growing need, it was voted March 3, 1783, "that the Northerly Squardren belonging to the School House standing near Mr. Cohee's be permitted to remove said House, (att their own Expense) and Set it at the Crotch of the Road near Mr. Whitmond's house." And on the 18th of the following December it was also voted "that the most Northerly people Draw their money for their school as yusal," then voted "to Build a Schoolhouse in the Northerly part of this town and Sett it upon a ridge of Land near Mr. Milen's house and near the most North-erly River,—Mr. Jonathan Sawyer promising to give the Land to the Town for sd Schoolhouse to Stand upon." The house was to be like those already built, and a committee was chosen to have charge of its erection. The work was done as ordered, and accepted by the town May 11, 1786, when £20 8s. were appropriated in payment of the incurred expense.

On the 16th of November, 1784, the policy was inaugurated of having a special committee appointed, consisting of one person in each squadron or district, for the purpose of superintending the affairs of such district, as attested by a vote "to choose a head for every Squaderon to each School house in the town for to notify their Respective Quarters," etc. A six months' grammar school having been previously determined upon, it was also voted "that it be kept equal proportions of time in the middle of the town and in the house near Capt. Elisha Jackson's in the Southwest part of the town," now South Gardner.

A considerable settlement having been made about this time in what may be properly designated "the Minott neighborhood," at an inconvenient distance from any schoolhouse, the inhabitants were permitted for several years "to draw their proportion of the school money and spend it to the best possible advantage as they saw fit."

The original schoolhouse of the town, located on the old common, having become somewhat out of repair and being, moreover, insufficient in size to accommodate the increasing number of children in the district to which it belonged, it was deemed advisable to put up an entirely new building, and a vote was passed to that effect April 14, 1789. This, the second house in the center district, was located ten feet in the rear of the one it was designed to supplant, and ten feet from Esquire Holden's line. It is well remembered by some of the older inhabitants, a few of whom, still living, having learned their alphabet and won their first educational laurels within its walls.

**School Districts.** On the 3d of May, 1790, a committee consisting of "three persons at large and one for each School-





house" was chosen "to district the town for the better accommodation of Schooling." The members of the committee were—at large, Isaac Williams, Dea. Joseph Miller, Capt. Elisha Bigelow; for the middle district, Abner Holden, Esq.; south, Nicholas Dike, Esq.; east, Lieut. Edward Bacon; west, Mr. Edward Jackson; north, Mr. David Child; northeast, Capt. Joseph Flint. The committee reported on the 4th of October, following; their report was accepted and its recommendations adopted. As it was the basis of the long existing school district system of the town, its characteristic features are given in full, substantially as they are preserved in the records.

**MIDDLE DISTRICT.** Beginning at Jonathan Hager's and including said Hager, thence to Caleb Parker's and thence to Sally Miles' house, from that point with the road to the dwelling of Capt. Elisha Bigelow, including all residing on the road; from Capt. Bigelow's to Ensign Woodward's, thence to Samuel Miller's, thence to Widow Stearns' house, thence to Benjamin Howard's and to Stephen Holden's, and from thence to Capt. Edgell's Cavendar house and on to where it first began. All within said lines, including the persons mentioned, constitute the Middle District.

**SOUTH DISTRICT.** Beginning at Capt. Noah Mileses, thence to Lieut. Mileses and to old Mr. Sawin's, so to extend the same course to Hubbardston line, thence by said line and on Princeton line and Westminster line till it includes Isaac Williams land, and thence to Capt. Jonathan Hager's land between Hager's and Abel Wood's and so on to Caleb Parker's land inclusively.

**SOUTH WEST DISTRICT.** Beginning at Mr. Rice's Houghton Farm [So. Westminster], thence to Capt. Samuel Sawin's and in that direction to Hubbardston line, so with said line and Gardner line till it comes to the County road to Templeton, then with said road to Capt. Bigelow's, and on the Middle District line to Sally Mileses house and to where it first began;—All within said Bounds to be considered in the new District except those living on the road from Sally Mileses house to Capt. Bigelow's who belong to the Middle District.

**EAST DISTRICT.** From Stephen Holden's, but not including him, to Joseph Holden's, thence by James Taylor's and Edward Bacon's to Fitchburg line, then with said line southward and on Westminster line till it comes to the South District at Isaac Williams land, then with said District to Capt. Hager's land thence with the Middle District to where it began: all within said bounds to belong to the East District.

**NORTH EAST DISTRICT.** From Samuel Whitney's [on Bean Porridge Hill] easterly to Fitchburg line, thence with said line to the northeast corner of the town and so along Ashburnham line till it meets the great road leading to said Ashburnham, [near John Ward's,] thence to the pond, thence by Jonathan Sawyer's house to the first mentioned point. All within said bounds to belong to said District.

**NORTH DISTRICT.** Beginning at Abner Whitney's and extending easterly by Joseph Holden's to the East District line, then by said line to James Taylor's and Lieut. Bacon's, then to Lieut. Rand's house, and thence to Josiah Wheeler's and by the pond to the town line, and with that line to Blocked's house and to the line of Gardner, then from Gardner line to Mr. Houghton's house, thence along the road to where it began: all on said road and within said bounds to belong to the North District.

**NORTH WEST DISTRICT.** Beginning at the town line above Blocked's house wher Gardner corners with Westminster, thence with the town line by Widow Mileses to the County road to Templeton, then with said road to Capt. Bigelow's then to follow the Middle District line to Ensign Wood-



wards, to Samuel Miller's and to Abner Whitney's thence along the North District line to where it first began. It includes all those residing within these bounds, who with Widow Miles constitute the West District.

For many years after the town was thus formally divided into squadrons or districts, the annual appropriation for school purposes was distributed equally between such districts. But on the 2d of April, 1792, through the influence, no doubt, of voters in the larger districts who naturally felt that they were entitled to a greater amount of money than the smaller ones could justly claim, it was voted "that each school district have their proportion of the appropriation and Grant, according to the number of scholars from 4 to 21 years old." This was a new rule altogether, and necessitated the careful numbering of those of the prescribed ages from year to year by the prudential committees of the several districts, in addition to their other duties and cares. It prevailed, however, but a single year, the town going back, in 1793, to the old method of an equal division of the public school funds among the several districts. In 1796 another plan was adopted, to wit; that of dividing the money among the districts according to the relative *number of families* residing in them, respectively. This proved on the whole satisfactory, and was in vogue for quite a long period.

For a long time subsequent to the districting of the town in 1790, school matters were in a very much muddled condition. The adopted division did not prove acceptable to all parties; some of the school buildings were getting much out of order, and the alternative of repairing them or of erecting new ones caused a good deal of excitement and some ill feeling; and when in any case it was decided to build anew, the question of location caused not a little controversy,—so that during the decade, 1790–1800, the subject of schools, schoolhouses, and school districts engrossed a large share of public attention. Numerous town meetings were held with a view of adjusting matters, but to very little purpose. Committees were chosen to redistrict the town, to locate new buildings, or otherwise to better the condition of things, and when they reported their doings, their reports were either rejected or, if approved, were followed by no efficient corresponding action.

Yet some changes were made worthy of note. The inhabitants in the southeast part of the town, who were located at a great distance from both the east and south schoolhouses, agreeably to a vote passed Dec. 17, 1794, put up a building for their own convenience and at their own expense, and were a year later constituted a district by themselves. The general agitation in regard to schoolhouses culminated at length in a vote to erect four new ones, in the south, north, east, and northwest districts, respectively, passed June 1, 1797. They were to be "26 feet long 22 feet wide and 10 feet high from the top of the sill to the top of the plate." Materials for the buildings were





allotted by a committee chosen for the purpose, and the privilege of furnishing the several lots was disposed of at auction, there being forty-one of these lots to each house, or one hundred and sixty-four in the aggregate. The work of construction was assigned to committees chosen by the town, and to each district was accorded "the privilege of having a Stove or Chimney [including fireplace] which they please." The buildings were to be completed by the 1st of October, 1798. In April of that year money was appropriated to pay the cost of them, amounting to \$1,678. The new buildings in the north and northwest districts were situated near the old ones. That in the east district was ordered to be placed "in the Centre between Lieut. Nathan Howards and William Murdocks," and that in the south district "on Lt Timothy Heywood's land nigh Lieut. Mileses Bowers' orchard."

The town gradually came back to the practice of employing female teachers, which, after a brief trial at the outset, seems to have fallen into public disfavor for a time. Having granted to certain districts for several years, notably the "old south," the privilege of having a "woman's school" a given number of weeks in the summer, a vote was passed Oct. 10, 1798, which was of general application, establishing a new policy in this regard, to wit:—"to appropriate not more than one fourth nor less than one sixth of the School money for the purpose of keeping a woman's school the present year." From this time onward for nearly half a century the summer terms of the schools were in charge of female teachers, while those of winter were still presided over by male instructors, who, to other qualifications, added that of a brawny arm, which was deemed essential to pedagogical success in those days. After the termination of the period indicated, women began to supersede men as teachers in the *winter* season, and continued to do so until at length only female teachers were employed in any of the schools any portion of the year, a practice that has prevailed almost universally for nearly a generation.

The inhabitants of the southwest district had for many years no schoolhouse. Early in 1800 a committee was appointed to consider the matter of erecting one and reporting thereon. They did so on the 15th of the next December, favoring the project and recommending that the building be located "on the Eastwardly side of a road newly Layed out by the Selectmen and on or near the Line between Benjamin Nichols and Abner Sawin's Land." The report was accepted and its recommendations were adopted. Appropriate action with respect to carrying those recommendations into effect was taken, and on the 16th of March, 1801, the work of construction was let to Jonathan Minott, to be completed on or before the 25th of October. On the 9th of November the house was reported as finished and became a part of the school equipment of the town.



**School Books.** Until the year 1803 neither rules nor restrictions were established in regard to the use of books in the work of public instruction. On the 4th of April of that year a committee was appointed "to take into Consideration the expediency of a uniform Sistem of Books to be used in the Schools &c." The committee consisted of Abel Wood, Abner Holden, Asa Farnsworth, Jacob Sawyer, Zachariah Rand, Merari Spaulding, Jonathan Minott, Jonas Whitney, and Timothy Heywood. On the 24th of October this committee reported to the following effect:—"It is the unanimous opinion of your Committee that the Bible or some abridgement or preparation from the Bible be introduced into the several schools to be read by the Senior class once a day." This brief report was recommitted, with instructions to designate more fully what should be made the basis of study, which was accordingly done shortly afterward. It is interesting at this day to note the works finally recommended:—"Perry's Spelling Book, Stanniford's Art of Reading, Scott's Lessons, Morse's Abridgement, Beauties of the Bible." The town clerk was instructed "to furnish the heads of Districts with the above vote and Catalogue of Books above recommended." Two years later the subject was referred again to a large committee who reported "that the mode that has been adopted by the Town is highly interesting and will be for the improvement of Learning to continue," recommending the same catalogue of books as before, with "the addition of a Book the title of which is the 'Understanding Reader.'" It appears that the reading of the Scriptures in the schools was not practiced, and this committee expressed it as "our opinion that the Bible or the above preparation from it ought to be introduced . . . to be read by the Senior Class at least once a day."

**Superintendence.** The schools of the town for forty years were under the direction and inspection of no special superintending committee. The selectmen had in charge their general business features, the details of which were entrusted to the several prudential committees, as before stated. But no provision had ever been made for the oversight of their internal discipline, either as regards deportment or study, only as the Constitution of the Commonwealth made it the duty of the ministers of religion to visit them and exercise advisory power over them in the interest of good morals and the public welfare. By some unexplained misapprehension it was understood by the public that a law had been enacted requiring towns to choose annually, with other public officers, a school committee to have charge of all the internal affairs of the public schools, —providing teachers, prescribing books, maintaining order, and doing what seemed necessary to their successful administration. Under this mistaken idea the citizens of Westminster at the annual meeting in March, 1806, elected Merari Spaulding, Solo-



mon Strong, Dr. Benjamin Marshall, Rufus Dodds, Ezra Wood, Edward Bacon, and Hayman Wheeler for the purpose indicated, — these persons thus becoming the initial school board of the town. Their successors are given in the closing chapter of this work.

In some of the larger districts the privilege was frequently granted of having the summer school, or portions of it, held in private dwellings in neighborhoods remote from the school-houses, in order to bring educational facilities for a short time, at least, within the reach of children who would otherwise be deprived of them. As, for instance, it was voted May 15, 1809, "that one third part of the money appropriated to the North School District be kept in a woman's school—one third part of that third to be kept at the School-house, one third in the south part and one third in the north part of said District." This district was very large, extending from the present town farm to Ashburnham line and from Beech Hill to Bean Porridge Hill.

In 1810 the several districts, which had previously been distinguished from each other by their relative geographical position, were numbered in regular order and were known and designated afterward by the respective numbers then assigned them. Those numbers corresponded essentially with the order in which the districts were formed, chronologically considered, to wit:—No. 1, Middle District; No. 2, North or Scrabble Hollow District; No. 3, Old South District; No. 4, East or Pine Woods District; No. 5, Northwest or Beech Hill District; No. 6, Northeast or Phillips' Brook District; No. 7, Southeast or Williams District; No. 8, Southwest or Minott District.

Although the town originally built the schoolhouses and paid for them by general taxation, yet they seemed after a time to pass, either by common consent or right of possession (no action of the town to that effect having been recorded), into the ownership of the districts, respectively, which seem to have been held in duty bound, not only to keep them in repair at their own expense, but to replace them with new ones when necessary. Nevertheless, it was sometimes the case that the town rendered some assistance in rebuilding, as when, in 1816, the treasurer was authorized, by request of district No. 6, to pay \$75 for the purpose designated.

On the 2d of November, 1818, a committee previously chosen to consider the subject, reported in favor of a proposition to establish what was called a grammar school, in which the higher English branches and also Latin and Greek might be taught, which report received the sanction of the citizens. One hundred and fifty dollars were appropriated for its support. It was a sort of "moving school," being kept consecutively in districts Nos. 1, 2, and 4. The experiment seems to have been tried only for one year.





**New Districts.** At a meeting held May 7, 1821, Joel Whitney and twenty-one others, residing on or in the vicinity of the North Common, petitioned for a new school district to be taken mostly from what had been No. 2. After due consideration the request was granted, and district No. 9 acquired "a local habitation and a name." The inhabitants of whom it was composed built the brick schoolhouse still standing at their own expense, the town refusing a grant of \$60 in aid thereof, as recommended by a committee to whom the matter had been referred.

At a meeting held April 3, 1826, Col. Oliver Adams and eight others were constituted a committee "to see if any alteration is necessary in any of the School Districts and if so what alteration." This action took place in response to a petition of Andrew Darby and others for a new district in the south part of the town. The committee reported, four weeks later, in favor of granting the request and of making a few other unimportant changes elsewhere. This report was adopted and district No. 10, in what was known as the Sawin neighborhood, was consequently established.

At the annual meeting in March, 1838, a petition was presented to the town by a number of inhabitants belonging to the old south district, No. 3, asking for a new district to be composed of those families residing on the west side of Graves' Hill. The subject was referred to a committee consisting of Simeon Sanderson, Edward Kendall, and Joseph Whitney, who, at an adjourned meeting, made a lengthy report in favor of granting the request. The report was accepted and the new district, No. 11, was formed in accordance with its recommendations. For several years the school met in private dwellings, but in 1848 a house was built near the residence of Daniel Harrington, on land given for the purpose by John Heywood.

Nine years later, by reason of the considerable increase of inhabitants along the line of the Fitchburg road in the vicinity of the railway station, it became desirable that better facilities for schooling should be furnished the children there than could be enjoyed under then existing conditions, and so, upon petition of the interested parties, the old east district No. 4 was divided and No. 12 was established, the schoolhouse of which was erected soon afterward on the spot where it now stands. About the same time, the old house in No. 4 was abandoned and a new one built in the lower part of Wachusettville, for the better accommodation of all concerned, and especially of the families residing in the so-called No-town territory.

In the year 1828 the privilege of choosing the prudential committees, which had before been exercised by the whole town, was transferred to the districts themselves, each one being allowed to elect its own, though the town for a few years retained the right and went through the form of approving the



districts' choice, and of electing a committee when a district neglected to do so. Ultimately the whole responsibility in this regard was thrown upon the districts, respectively.

It was found, in or about the year 1837, that the law in regard to the formation of school districts had not been strictly conformed to in the town's practice, inasmuch as there had been no careful and accurate survey of their respective outlines and no corresponding locating of proper metes and bounds, as the statutes required. Accordingly a committee consisting of Abraham Wood, Wonder Wears, and Edward Kendall was chosen to attend to the neglected duty. They did so, making a definite and detailed report of their labors at the annual meeting in March, 1838. As there was practically no change in the districts as they have been delineated in preceding pages, no further attention is given to this matter.

**Reduction of Schools.** The division of the town for school purposes had now reached its utmost limit, and ere many years passed by the question arose, not how to increase but how to diminish the number of districts and houses, in order the better to accommodate the children of the town, and provide for the expenditure of the school appropriation in a way to accomplish the most good. The decline in the population of the outlying sections, and especially among those of school-going age, made it necessary to consolidate in some instances and to make other changes adapted to the changed condition of things in the community. District No. 11 was in due time given up altogether. The growth of South Westminster necessitated the removal of the house in No. 10 to its present location. For many years two schools have existed in the Center village, and sometimes three, in addition to the select or high school. Under existing circumstances, here as in other towns, it is a serious problem how to conduct school affairs in sparsely settled communities so as to secure the best results to all classes of people in the matter of public education—a problem which must be left for the future to solve.

**Select and High Schools.** The Westminster Academy having been abandoned as a strictly private educational institution, in or about the year 1860, the town soon began to consider the expediency of establishing a higher grade of school than had hitherto been maintained by public appropriation, for the benefit of those who might be desirous of pursuing a more advanced course of instruction than the existing schools afforded. The vacated Academy building offered certain requisite facilities for such an undertaking. Accordingly, on the 6th of March, 1865, it was voted to raise \$200 in addition to the usual appropriation for educational purposes, for a select school, "half of which was to be used for a term of such school provided the same amount or more be raised by tuition or by subscription," "to be expended at the discretion of the School Committee."





Similar action was taken for several years in succession, much to the advantage of those desiring the privileges thereby made accessible to them. In 1868 an effort was made to have the town purchase the "Old Academy" for its own permanent use, but without avail. The effort was repeated, and in 1871 the result aimed at was secured. From that date to the present, the high school has been an important and highly prosperous department of the educational system of the town. The editor of this work regrets to announce that while engaged in the preparation of its contents for the press, the "Old Academy," which had housed the high school for twenty years, and, by its commanding position on Meetinghouse Hill, been a striking and picturesque landmark for more than half a century, was wholly destroyed by fire, the unfortunate event occurring in February, 1888.

**Division of School Money.** The method or rule of dividing the money appropriated for school purposes among the several districts, until the opening of the present century, has been sufficiently indicated in foregoing paragraphs. At that date it was distributed in proportion to the number of families in each district separately considered. This practice continued till 1819, when the town voted "to divide the school money according to the number of scholars from four years to twenty one years of age." In 1820 and 1821 the old plan of dividing according to the number of families was restored. In 1822 it was divided equally, each district receiving the same amount. In 1823 the number of scholars between the ages of four and twenty-one was again made the basis of division, which plan prevailed till 1832, when \$100 was reserved from the general distribution, to be used by the committee, as their judgment dictated, in aid of the smaller districts. In 1837 the sum left for discretionary use by the committee was increased to \$150. This rule continued with slight variations till 1851, when, the amount of the appropriation being \$1500, it was voted that \$1000 be divided equally between the several schools, allowing three for the center district, and \$500 according to the number of scholars. With the exception that in 1858 and subsequently the center district was credited with only two schools, the last method of division prevailed substantially till 1868, when, at an adjourned annual meeting held April 20th, the district system of the town was abolished, agreeably to the laws of the Commonwealth. Since that date the entire management of the schools, including the distribution of money, has been in the hands of the superintending school committee. The schoolhouses, which thereby came once more into the possession of the town, were duly appraised the following year, and their value credited to the inhabitants of the districts to which they severally belonged.

The first *printed* "Report" of the school committee was sub-





W. P. ALLEN, GARDNER, MASS.

CENTER SCHOOL HOUSE.





mitted to the voters at the annual meeting in 1852, thus inaugurating a custom that has prevailed to the present day.

For a few years past, the town, in accordance with a recent law of the State, has been associated with several others in the vicinity in the employment of a *special* superintendent, whose office it is to have charge of the internal affairs of the schools, — suggesting methods, arranging classes, systematizing operations, etc., in co-operation with and under the direction of the general committee. This plan relieves the official board of much responsibility in respect to the details of school work, and seems to have been attended thus far with most advantageous and happy results; promising, if continued, immense good to the educational interests of the community at large in the years and generations to come.

The school building now standing in the center of the town occupies the site of an old brick one erected some seventy-five years ago to supersede that located on the common in 1789. It was originally of one story, but was raised up, reconstructed, and fitted for its present uses soon after the destruction of the "Old Academy" in 1888. As now arranged and equipped, it accommodates not only the lower grades of school as formerly, but the high school also. It is a commodious, well proportioned, attractive structure — an ornament to the village, and an honor to the town. An admirable picture of it appears on the opposite page.

**Appropriations.** It is thought that the general progress of the town in relation to school matters, and the prevailing interest of its inhabitants in the subject of popular education may be sufficiently indicated by presenting, in condensed form, a statement of the amount of appropriation every fifth year from the date of incorporation, as follows:—1760, £6; 1765, £13 6s. 8d.; 1770, £14; 1775, £35; 1780, £600 in depreciated currency and interest of proceeds of school lands sold; 1785, £50 and interest amounting to about £35; 1790, £60; 1795, £80; 1800, \$400; 1805, \$500; 1810, \$520; 1815, \$520; 1820, \$520; 1825, \$730; 1830, \$700; 1835, \$800; 1840, \$1000; 1845, \$1000; 1850, \$1500; 1855, \$1500; 1860, \$1400; 1865, \$1500; 1870, \$2700; 1875, \$2500; 1880, \$2750; 1885, \$3200; and in 1890, \$3150.

The public schools of Westminster have always maintained a creditable standing in the general community, have trained a large number of persons who, with additional advantages, have gained a well-earned success as teachers at home and abroad, and have prepared many of the sons and daughters of the town for higher institutions of learning and for useful and honorable callings, professions, and positions in life. They have fully justified their existence as an important factor in promoting the prosperity and happiness of the people, and illustrated the utility and value of the educational system established by the





founders of New England, in its relation to the support and perpetuity of the institutions of civil and religious liberty in the land, and to the enduring welfare and glory of the American Republic. Long may they live and prosper, scattering blessings on all classes of people in the future as in the past, contributing in large measure, as the years go by, to make strong and sure the foundations of many generations.

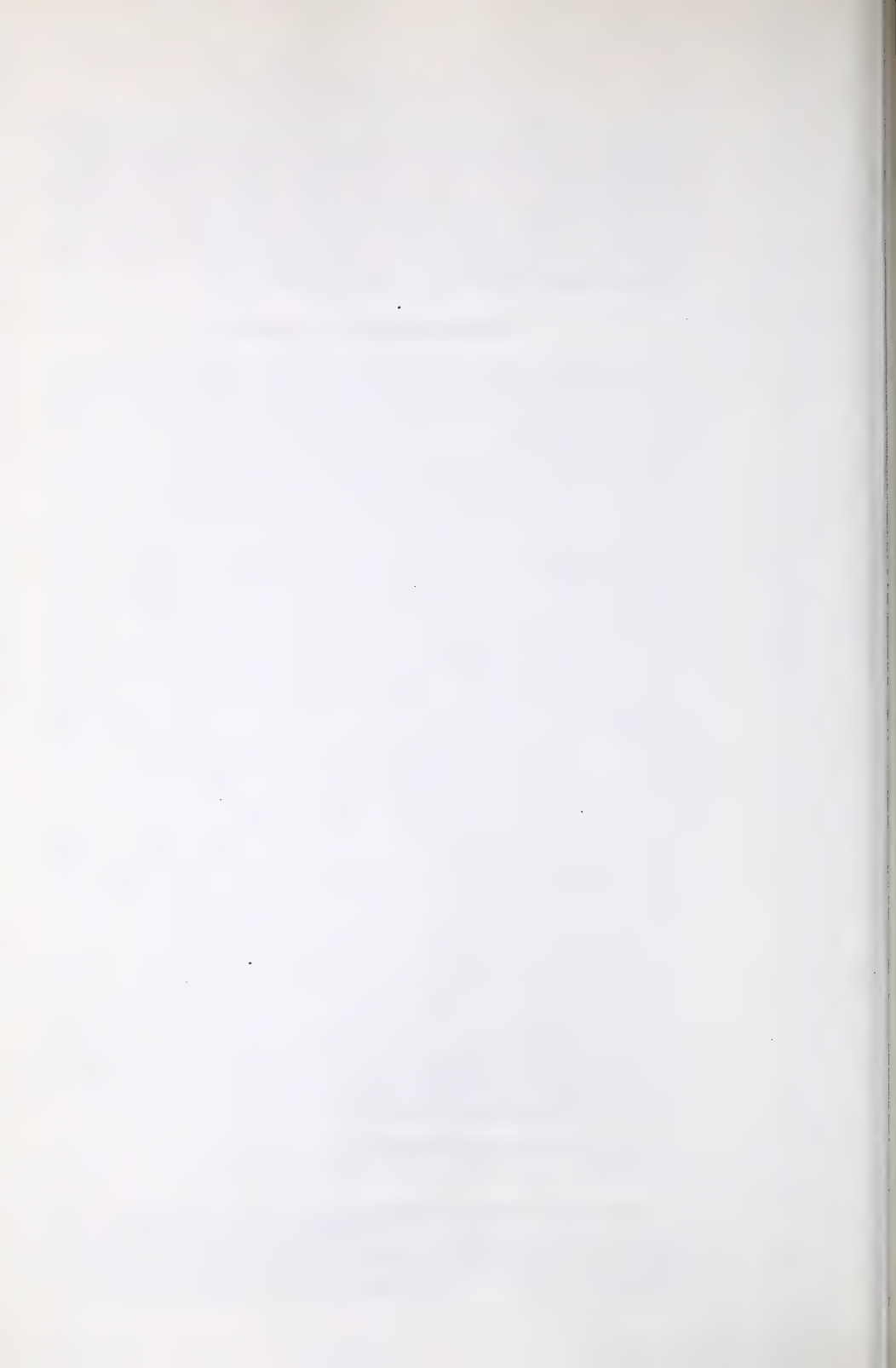
#### WESTMINSTER ACADEMY.

The term Academy, derived from the Greek *Academus*, the name of a certain wise man who, several centuries B. C., established in the suburbs of Athens a school for teaching gymnastics and philosophy, has a two-fold signification in modern speech, representing in the first place an association of persons formed for the purpose of promoting a knowledge of the arts and sciences in general, or some specific branch of the same, and in the second, an institution or seminary of learning holding an intermediate rank between the university or college and the common school. In the latter sense it came to be used in New England during the period of the Revolution, when several educational enterprises of the grade and character indicated were founded and given a standing before the public by an "Act of Incorporation" from the State Legislature. The first of these was Phillips' Academy, Andover, incorporated 1780, though it had existed for two years under the title of Phillips' school. In 1782 the Dummer school, started at Byfield in 1756, was incorporated as "Dummer Academy"; and in 1784 Leicester Academy received similar honors from the General Court. Soon after came Westford Academy, and in 1793 Westfield Academy was established in the county of Hampden. These all have had a memorable history, and with the exception of the latter, which has been transformed into a public high school, are still extant and doing excellent educational work.

It seems that the citizens of Westminster were animated by something of the same zeal for sound learning that prevailed elsewhere as set forth, and that about the same time they had some aspirations for an institution in their midst similar to those just mentioned. At a meeting held Jan. 14, 1793, upon an article in the warrant "to see if the Town will Do anything to encourage the Building [an] Accedeminy in this Town and Support it when Built," the citizens

"Voted, and granted one hundred pounds for the use of an Acedemy in this Town."

There was, however, strong opposition to this measure, which caused another meeting to be held on the 29th of the same month, when the above vote was reconsidered and the project abandoned, not to be urged again for more than thirty years.



At length, in 1828 or 1829, Rev. Cyrus Mann, an old teacher and college tutor, much interested in the course of education generally, and desirous of having the opportunity of a higher range of study than the existing public schools afforded opened to the young people of the town, broached anew the subject of establishing an Academy in the place; not, however, as a public, but as a private enterprise. He found a goodly number of sympathizers, chiefly among his own people, who heartily co-operated with him in carrying the proposed undertaking into effect, the result of which was the erection in 1829, on the westerly brow of Meetinghouse Hill, of a two-story building sufficiently commodious and suitably arranged to further the purposes for which it was designed. It was located in the vicinity of the principal house of worship, so that it might serve in part as a vestry, or place of social religious meeting, and for other incidental uses connected with church work. This was thought by many people of the town to indicate a sectarian purpose on the part of those who had charge of the enterprise, and considerable opposition to it was developed on that ground. If there was any reason for this view at the outset, as there may have been, it, after a few years, passed away, and the institution received at length the confidence and patronage of all classes in the community.

The Academy building having been properly furnished and made ready for use in the spring of 1830, announcement of its opening on the 17th of May appeared in the *Massachusetts Spy* some time before that date. It was to be under the care of Franklin Jones of Royalston, a graduate of Amherst College. Tuition \$3 per quarter, with small addition for those advanced in languages. Board in respectable families could be had for from \$1 to \$1.50 per week. This announcement was signed by Cyrus Mann and Flavel Cutting for the proprietors. A year later a similar notice was given to the public, with the additional statement that a female department would be established. Mr. Jones was still principal.

The successors of Mr. Jones during the decade 1830-1840, were Rev. William C. Jackson, afterwards missionary in Turkey; William C. Clark; Josiah Clark, who became a notable educator; — Hastings; James T. McCullum; Nathan Allen, a physician of note in Lowell, and a considerable writer upon health, hygiene, longevity, vital statistics, etc.; Robert S. Hitchcock; Samuel Taylor; and a Mr. Spofford. At different dates when an emergency arose by reason of failure to find the right man for the principal's chair, or of the illness or incompetency and consequent discharge of the incumbent, Rev. Mr. Mann came in as a temporary supply, serving with versatile skill and efficiency.

A good degree of success attended the school for some years after its opening. Rev. Charles Hudson, by no means an enthusiastic friend of the institution at the time, said in 1832,





"It has been as well sustained as academies in general, having an average of 35 or 40 pupils." It was about this date that Mr. Mann, who was tireless in his efforts for the school of which he was virtually the founder, wrote in his journal: "I have been making a great effort to procure some apparatus for our Academy and have succeeded beyond my expectations. I have been to Boston and obtained an air pump, electrical machine, chemical apparatus, microscope, magic lantern, etc., etc., and I have secured several hundred dollars for the benefit of the institution."

As the decade mentioned drew to its close there came a decline in the prosperity of the school, the number of pupils finally falling off to such an extent that it was deemed wise to suspend operations until more encouraging prospects should warrant their resumption. At this time, in the summer of 1840, when there was little to inspire hope among the friends of the enterprise, Abner Holden Merriam, A. B., a native of the place and a former pupil, who had recently graduated from Dartmouth College, resolved to see what he could do to rehabilitate it and start it out anew in its career of usefulness and honor. He canvassed the town and its environs in order to obtain funds for putting the building in better condition, procuring additional apparatus and other appliances, etc., wherein he met with unexpected good fortune, which enabled him to carry his plans into early effect. In the autumn of the year designated he reopened the school with a gratifying number of students, and in a brief period under his charge it attained a degree of prosperity never known before in its history. This continued till the summer of 1847, when he retired from the position in which he had labored with unfaltering fidelity and zeal, gaining credit to himself and a multitude of grateful and kindly appreciative friends.

He was followed by another native of the town, J. R. Gaut, A. B., a graduate of Amherst, and an earnest and devoted teacher. He kept up the character and reputation of the institution, and his six years' labors were crowned with a success worthy of much commendation. By his urgent solicitation and the confidence he inspired, means were obtained for enlarging the academy building during his term of office, and for enriching its equipment for prosecuting the work it was intended to do. The thirteen years covered by the principalships of Messrs. Merriam and Gaut, from 1840 to 1853, constituted the halcyon period of the Academy's history, and are remembered with satisfaction and delight by many who shared their instructions and the privileges connected therewith, and by those of the then existing citizens of the town who continue to this day.

Subsequently to the retirement of Mr. Gaut, the Academy was in charge successively of W. S. C. Abbot, James F. Clark,



C. D. Jeffords, Mr. Johnson, Henry Clark, W. K. Davy, W. B. Pond, Albert S. Ingalls, — Nichols, Wilber F. Whitney, Wm. B. Adams, Francis A. Whitney, Alvin Sawyer, Timothy Holden, and perhaps others, none of them "to the manner born," whose terms of service were of varying length, whose labors were more or less successful and satisfactory, and whose honors and rewards the historian makes no attempt to estimate or classify and distribute.

During the incumbency of several if not all of these, it was written in the book of fate, and became apparent to clear-eyed observers, that the days of the Academy were numbered, and that the end of its existence was only a question of time. The establishment of public high schools in most of the neighboring towns reduced very greatly the number of pupils from beyond the town boundaries, and consequently the income derived from that source; while there were too few at home to furnish adequate support for a private institution of that sort. These considerations, added to the growing conviction in the community at large that the higher branches of the English tongue, including the elements of science, literature, art, and history, with rudimentary instruction in ancient and modern languages, should be provided for in the curriculum of the public school system, opened the way for, and hastened the coming of, the day when the Westminster Academy gave place and patronage to the Westminster High School, as elsewhere set forth. The final act in the drama of the life of the institution was the legal conveyance of the building, land, etc., constituting its salable property, from the corporate proprietors to the town, agreeably to a vote of the citizens passed in regular meeting on the 7th of November, 1871.

The Academy, though started in 1830, was not incorporated till 1833, when it received its first charter, clothing it with special rights, privileges, and immunities, agreeably to the laws of the Commonwealth, which were reaffirmed and enlarged by a second act of the Legislature, passed March 31, 1847, bearing the approving signature of the honored Governor, George N. Briggs.

**The Reunion of 1884.** A somewhat unique and intensely interesting event connected with the history of the Academy was the bringing together of a large number of its former pupils and patrons some twenty years after it had ceased to exist as an educational force in the community. The movement looking to this consummation was started at the "Old Folks' Picnic" of June 20, 1883, when several of the old students who were present consulted with each other upon the matter, and, after agreeing upon its desirability, set on foot activities which resulted in a meeting of as many interested persons as could easily be convened, including delegates from Worcester, Boston, etc., at the town hall, Feb. 12, 1884. At that



meeting an organization was effected under the name of the "Westminster Academy Memorial Association," with Hon. S. R. Heywood, president, and Henry M. Smith, secretary, both of Worcester, with such other officers, committees, etc., as were deemed necessary to carry the project into effect. These, having full power to act in the premises, proceeded to make arrangements for the contemplated gathering, fixing upon the 6th and 7th of the following August as the date thereof, and causing notices to be given and circulars issued accordingly.

As provided for and duly announced, an informal meeting of as many as could well be accommodated was held in the Academy building on the evening of the first-named day, at which impromptu speeches, combining personal experience, reminiscence, incident, wit and wisdom, were made by P. P. Heywood of Chicago, who presided, Dr. Nathan Allen, A. Holden Merriam, Rev. William A. Mandell, S. A. Stevens, Dr. John H. White, Dea. Edward Kendall, Rev. Henry Cummings, Charles Hudson, Henry M. Smith, Rev. William S. Heywood, and others. The more formal exercises took place in the Congregational Church on the morning of the next day, beginning at 10.30 o'clock and continuing according to the following

#### PROGRAMME.

1. Music, by the South Gardner Band.
2. Address of Welcome, by Hon. S. R. Heywood of Worcester.
3. Address of the President of the Day, Ex-Governor Washburn of Greenfield.
4. Prayer, by Rev. Henry Cummings of Stafford, Vt.
5. Original Hymn to the tune of "America."
6. Oration, by Thomas H. Russell, Esq., of Boston.
7. Music, by the Band.
8. Address, "The Old New England Academy," by Nathan Allen, M. D., of Lowell.
9. Song, "The Star Spangled Banner," by Mrs. F. P. Whitney of Boston.
10. Poem, by Rev. William S. Heywood of Boston.
11. Hymn for the occasion, to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne."
12. Benediction.

A collation, free to all who had been associated with the academy as teachers or pupils, was served at 1.30 P. M., under a tent pitched in Mr. Charles T. Damon's field near by, at which about six hundred plates were laid and utilized. After the dinner, sentiments were given by H. M. Smith, toastmaster, and responded to as indicated:—1. "The Old Preceptors," response by *Dr. Nathan Allen*; 2. "The Founders of the Academy," *Dea. Edward Kendall*; 3. "A shining shield at that early day bore the name of Charles Hudson," *Hon. William W. Rice*; 4. "The Cushing Academy of Ashburnham," *Principal Vose*; 5. "Leicester Academy," *Hon. Charles A. Denny* of Leicester; 6. "The Worcester Technical School," *Principal H. T. Fuller*; 7. "What I know about farming," *William H.*





*Earle*; 8. "Westminster Academy and the learned professions," *Rev. Quincy Whitney*; 9. "The Academy and the useful arts," *Hon. John M. Moore*; 10. "Education in its higher aspects," *Rev. William S. Heywood*. A. Holden Merriam favored the audience with pleasant incidents of his long experience as principal of the Academy, and H. M. Smith responded to "The Press," an informal sentiment offered by a previous speaker.

The exercises closed with mutual greetings, congratulations, and farewells.

The occasion was an unqualified success — one of rare interest and of unexcelled satisfaction and delight. The attendance was unexpectedly large, about six hundred former members of the institution being present, and as many more outside participants and observers. Not often is so much unalloyed happiness crowded into a single day. The fortunate issue of the undertaking was largely due to the unwearied labor of Mr. H. M. Smith of Worcester, and the hearty generosity of Mr. Wm. B. Wood of Boston.

#### PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Other instrumentalities for promoting the cause of popular education and securing the great ends of intellectual and moral culture, beside those represented in the curriculum of the schools, have long been recognized by leading citizens of the town, who have used their influence and their money to bring within the reach of the community at large facilities for improving the mind and increasing the stores of useful knowledge not required by the statutes of the Commonwealth. They saw at an early day the importance and value of the public library as an educative power among the people, anticipating by two or three generations that widely extended conviction of later years which has resulted in the establishment, in almost every town and hamlet of the State, either by public appropriation or private munificence, of one or more of these highly commendable institutions. Near the close of the last century, the exact date not being ascertainable, a social library, as it was termed, was started, which had a wide patronage and ran a long career of honor and usefulness. Little is known about it at this day; no records or memoranda of its history having been found, save what exist in the memories of some of the older inhabitants, in a few volumes from its shelves still extant, and in the provisions of certain testamentary papers left by here and there one of those having an interest in it. It seems to have been started by an association of joint stock proprietors whose investment was represented by certificates of shares of undefined monetary value. It was probably accessible to the general public upon the payment of a fixed annual fee. Where it was at first located, there have appeared no means of determining. It is understood that it was for a while housed at



the residence of Capt. Nathan Whitney, who was probably librarian at the time, whence it was transferred to the cabinet shop of Edward Kendall, Esq., where it remained through all the later years of its existence, Mr. Kendall having it in charge. Once a week, on Saturday afternoon, it was open for the drawing or exchanging of books, when its patrons gathered in goodly numbers from all parts of the town to replenish their stock of reading matter for the seven days or more to come. It contained some hundreds of volumes, comprising a generous variety of solid and useful literature,—travels, discoveries, histories, biographies, etc., with a considerable percentage of moral and theological essays and expositions, which filled no small place in the general circulation. Persons still living acknowledge themselves to have been greatly benefited by that first library of the town, not only in the way of increasing their stock of valuable information, but of creating in them a love of reading which has contributed very essentially to the usefulness and pleasure of life. It was no doubt of great service in the same behalf to many others and a blessing to the town. About the year 1835 it was decided to sell the books at public auction and dissolve the association, and this was accordingly done.

After the formation of the society of Universal Restorationists, as hereafter to be related, another social library was established, mostly, if not wholly, by persons belonging to that fellowship. It is understood to have been chiefly composed of moral, religious, and theological works, the latter relating principally to those principles and doctrines which the society claimed to represent. It was located for a time at Mr. Joseph Whitman's, and was open to its patrons on Sunday, being easily accessible from the church at which they generally worshiped. It was not of long continuance, having been after a few years, it is thought, merged in the library of the Universalist Sunday School.

Each of the other religious societies of the town had libraries of considerable size connected with their respective Sunday Schools, to the privileges of which both children and adults were admitted free of expense. These all have been maintained with varying degrees of prosperity until the present day, and while prized mainly on account of their moral and religious character and influence, have unquestionably done much to stimulate the intellectual life of the community and to promote that higher and broader culture of the people at large to which head and heart, reason and religion, pay united tribute, and of which they are, in any just conception of the meaning and philosophy of education, co-ordinate factors.

**School Libraries.** At the annual meeting of March 7, 1842, the town was asked, through the agency of some of its most intelligent citizens, "to provide a Library for the several





school districts," but answered in the negative by a prompt vote to "dismiss the article" introducing the subject. During the Legislative Session of the same year, however, a law was enacted providing that "each School District in the Commonwealth upon giving proof to the Treasurer of the same that it has raised the sum of fifteen dollars for a School Library is entitled to receive fifteen dollars more from the treasury for the same object, to be paid by order of the Selectmen." Under this act several districts obtained the requisite amount and succeeded, with the aid of the sum received from the State, in procuring what was known as "The Common School Library," published under the sanction of the State Board of Education; a considerable collection of books largely historical and biographical, well calculated to interest the youthful mind and awaken a taste for reading and general self-improvement. This instrumentality was greatly appreciated by many people and rendered an important service in its way and time.

**The Free Public Library.** In the early winter of 1853-4 a number of young people in town "feeling the importance," as they said, "of Literary and Scientific attainments, and being desirous of doing all in our power to promote the Moral, Intellectual and Social improvement of this community," formed an association "for the above-named purposes" and duly organized themselves under a Constitution, taking for a name "The Westminster Young People's Literary Society." The first officers of the association were: *President*, W. S. Abbot, then principal of the academy; *Secretary*, Darius M. Allen; *Treasurer*, Abraham W. Wood; *Directors*, George Peckham, S. A. Burgess, Martha B. Fenno, Sarah Cummings. It was agreed to hold semi-monthly meetings, the exercises of which were to be: "the reading of original or selected articles, the discussion of any proper question, propounding and answering questions, declamations, colloquies or any other exercise calculated to instruct or improve its members." The better to further the purpose of self-improvement, the society very soon resolved to found a library. A small fee for membership had placed about twenty-five dollars at its disposal, and to increase this amount to a sum sufficient to warrant the inauguration of the new enterprise, it was proposed to hold a public entertainment, the proceeds of which should be devoted to that use. Without waiting to carry that proposition into effect, which would have required considerable time, a friend and earnest worker in the movement, Darius M. Allen, desirous, as were others also, to make a beginning with the library as soon as possible, loaned the society \$50 for the purpose. This, with the amount previously in hand, \$75 in all, was used to purchase the first installment of books, thus laying the foundation or forming the nucleus of what was destined to become a most useful and beneficent institution, having in its keeping a multi-



tude of benefits and blessings for all classes of the town's population. The exhibition proved a success, and Mr. Allen was at an early day reimbursed all that he had advanced in aid of the enterprise.

For several years the society prospered, and the library was enlarged year by year, the funds therefor being derived from membership fees, the annual payments of outsiders for the use of books, the proceeds of entertainments, private contributions, etc. But at length there came a decline of interest and the various activities of the association languished. The places of many of the original members had become vacant by death and removal, and recruits were insufficient to make them good. And the question, What shall be done? was urged upon the attention of the few who remained, and upon whom rested the responsibility in the case. That question had especial pertinency and force with regard to the library, which had gained the respectable size of several hundred volumes, assuming at length, as stated in an address or paper of Mrs. Sarah H. Whitman made to her associates Feb. 17, 1858, this form—"Shall it dwindle away from want of support, &c. or shall it become the foundation of a large and valuable Town Library?"

Upon the suggestion involved in this alternative, and the corresponding recommendation that the library be offered to the town on condition that there be a certain sum appropriated annually for the purchase of books, payment of a librarian, etc., and that a committee composed of an equal number of men and women be appointed to have particular charge of the same, —upon these the society seems to have acted approvingly. For at a town meeting held March 1, 1858, a proposition "To see if the town will appropriate money to sustain a Public Library" was referred to a committee, upon whose report, made April 7th, it was "voted that the proposition be rejected." There the matter rested for several years.

About the time of organizing this "Young People's Literary Society," a "Farmers' Club" was formed, one of the objects of which was to establish a library composed mostly of books relating to the subject of agriculture. As a result, a respectable collection of the best works of the character indicated had been brought together and put in circulation. But the club after a few years lost prestige, and the library fell into disuse for reasons that can easily be surmised.

In the year 1864 a project was started looking to the uniting of the two libraries, and committees were chosen by each of the organizations concerned, to see what could be done in the way of carrying the plan into effect. Conferences of these committees were held but nothing was accomplished, each party going on thereafter as before.

In the following year the Literary Society reorganized under the name of the "Westminster Library Association," with a





view of enlarging the membership and of enlisting the interest and co-operation of the people of the town generally in the maintenance of a public library. The movement seems to have been received with favor, about one hundred and forty persons uniting in the new organization, all parts of the town being represented therein. Under this arrangement, matters went on prosperously for a few years, the annual income and expenditure pertaining to this interest amounting to about one hundred dollars.

After a time, however, there came another decline in the support and patronage of the institution, and again arose the old question of what was to be done to put the library upon a sure basis and make it most efficient in serving the ends for which it was originally established. Once more its friends resolved to offer it to the town for general use, to be supported by stated appropriation of public money, and made accessible to all the people. Those interested in the Farmers' Library joined with the Library Association in making a proposition providing for the consolidation of the two collections of books in the way and for the purpose indicated. The town gave the proposition favorable consideration, and at length accepted it by a vote passed Nov. 3, 1868, empowering the selectmen to act as they deemed best in the matter.

Although one of the conditions upon which the books of the two associations were presented to the town was that "there should be a committee chosen annually to have charge of the same, purchase new books, &c.," yet for some years this proviso was disregarded, the selectmen supplying the place of such a committee. This mode of procedure not proving satisfactory, a committee was finally, in the year 1877, elected agreeably to the original plan, and a new and more efficient administration of library affairs was inaugurated. This first committee consisted of Jerome Whitman, Wallace Cheney, Sarah H. Whitman, Sarah C. Warner, Arabella Hager, who made their first report to the town at the annual meeting in 1878, which was printed in connection with the reports of other public officers. From that time to the present a library committee has been elected each year, and a yearly statement has been made of the workings of that important interest, its condition, prospects, needs, etc. The library has increased in popular favor as well as in size, and is exerting a wide and salutary influence as an educational force in the community. The committee who have it in charge exercise a wise discretion in the choice of books for its shelves, admitting no works but those of acknowledged literary merit and of healthful moral influence. For some years the office of librarian has been filled by Mrs. Sarah C. Warner, a lady of many accomplishments and of rare fitness for the position, the duties of which she discharges with conscientious fidelity and to the satisfaction of the public. The number of





volumes now in the catalogue of the library is nearly 3000; the number of applicants per year is about 300; and the number of books delivered, in round numbers, 5,000.

Upon the remodeling and the enlargement of the Town Hall building in 1885, accommodations were provided for the library in a large room upon the lower floor fitted up for the purpose, which will serve the need of the institution for some years to come. It is to be hoped, however, that at an early day some son or daughter of the town, interested in its prosperity and welfare, and desirous of manifesting that interest in a substantial way and of conferring a lasting benefit upon its population in time to come, will imitate the worthy example so often set in other places in these days, and furnish a building of ample dimensions, supplied with all needful equipments, and withal eligibly and conveniently located, which shall receive the library to its sheltering care and give it a permanent and appropriate home.

### THE LYCEUM.

Another institution which has had a prominent place among the educational agencies of the town and done much, especially in former days, to develop the mental energies of the people, quicken thought, and impart useful information, is the Lyceum. Like the academy, the term is of Greek origin, having been derived from a temple near Athens dedicated to Apollo Lyceus, and used for purposes of public instruction by lectures and the open discussion of questions of philosophy, ethics, and public policy. Much of the same character pertains to the lyceum of modern times.

At what date the first lyceum was started in this town, it is impossible to state. Mr. Hudson in his pamphlet history of 1832 speaks of one as then existing, though he gives no clue to its particular office and work, or to those who were active in promoting its efficiency and usefulness. It is not unreasonable to infer that he was himself, if not its founder, yet one of its most earnest and influential patrons and friends. For he was pre-eminently interested in the subject of popular education, and ready to aid by voice and pen and moral support any and every activity that in his judgment was calculated to dispel the shades of ignorance and diffuse light and knowledge far and wide as possible on every hand. What has been preserved to us of his early years and all his later life, suggest and confirm this judgment of the man and furnish warrant for all conclusions based upon it.

After the building of the town hall in 1839, frequent meetings of the lyceum were held in it for the discussion of important topics, chiefly of a social, moral, and economic character, and for lectures of the same general nature and value. Active in these meetings as debaters were such men



as Edward and George Kendall, Dr. John White, Theodore P. Locke, Joel Merriam, Jr., Alfred Wyman, Harrison G. Whitney, Darius M. Allen, and others, while a goodly number of women added to the variety, attractiveness, and profit of the gatherings by contributions from their pen. These debates and essays were interspersed and supplemented by lectures from some of the ablest and most eloquent public speakers of the time, of whom John Pierpont, Edwin H. Chapin, Theodore Parker, Wendell Phillips, and other well-known orators were fitting representatives. Not infrequently declamations, dramatic exercises, and musical renderings were introduced to diversify and lend additional charm to the proceedings.

This agency was of more than ordinary significance and value. The attendance upon its meetings was usually large, and the interest in its activities was kept to a remarkable degree of intensity throughout the autumn and winter season, and from year to year. No doubt much good was done in the way of calling public attention to subjects of the greatest moment, of stimulating thought and turning it into new channels, and of keeping up a healthful agitation of questions pertaining to the good order of society and to the general welfare and happiness. The citizens of the town seemed to recognize and appreciate this agency as a means of mental and moral improvement in the community, inasmuch as they repeatedly voted not only to grant the use of the town hall to those organized in its support, but to heat and light it free of all expense.

For twenty or more years the lyceum lived and wrought its work in the town and among the people. The breaking out of the war turned the thoughts of the public into other channels, and claimed its energies for the promotion of other objects. As a consequence, the lyceum disappeared from view and was never in its old and proper form re-established, other agencies and activities coming in to fill, in part at least, the place it once so honorably occupied.





## CHAPTER XIV.

### ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS—PART TWO.

EARLY MINISTRY OF REV. ASAPH RICE—SECOND MEETINGHOUSE—  
CLOSING YEARS OF REV. MR. RICE'S PASTORATE.

IT is to be deeply regretted that the records of the first church in Westminster, from the time of its formation in 1742 to the date of the settlement of the third minister of the town in 1815, are lost beyond all hope of recovery. As a consequence, the chronicler of events that transpired during that period of the religious history of the town is but imperfectly equipped for his task, and at best can give but a limited presentation of the subject he has in hand. His chief reliance for information must be the records of the town clerk, which, however perfectly kept, furnish but scanty material for his use. For the most part this relates to outside matters,—to the more secular aspects of the religious interests of the community, to the business concerns or machinery of church life, with only occasional glimpses or intimations of those operations and activities going on among the real workers in the cause of virtue and piety, which relate directly to human conduct and character, and which are, therefore, most worthy of notice and of remembrance. Much less do the town records take account of, or in any way reveal, anything of that inner spiritual condition of the church, of that conviction of the mind and judgment, of that consecration of heart and will, of that "life of God in the soul," which give to religious institutions their principal value as agencies for the enlightenment, uplifting, and redemption of mankind. If to the town clerk's records are added a few detached papers that have been preserved in some of the old families, incidental articles found in the public press of the period, certain traditions that have come down from past generations, and here and there a memory of some of the oldest inhabitants, the data upon which is based the ecclesiastical history of the town for the first half of its life are practically catalogued. Upon the authority of these data, with the qualifications and limitations suggested, the present chapter is prepared and assigned to its proper place in this work.

It was some years after the close of the pastorate of Rev. Elisha Marsh before a successor was found to fill the vacant place. Both church and town had been greatly disturbed by



the troubles that had arisen between the first minister and people, and neither were prepared to give a call to a new man until time and reflection and a better spirit had healed in a measure the wounded pride and feeling that existed on many a hand, and soothed the embitterments and animosities engendered by the dissension and strife of years to quietness and peace. The condition of things, as is always the case in such circumstances, was most unfortunate if not prejudicial to the cause of good morals and sincere piety, and all the better people of the town must have greatly lamented it.

Nevertheless, the church continued to receive substantial pecuniary support and the services and ordinances of religion were not suffered to fall into neglect. The regular appropriations for the supply of the pulpit were made from year to year, and efficient committees were chosen to see that they were wisely and properly expended. At a proprietors' meeting held Nov. 15, 1758, six months after the formal dismissal of Mr. Marsh, accounts were presented and accepted "for Mr. Angier's preaching, 4 days, £4 10s. 8d."; "for Mr. Swan's preaching, 13 days, £17 6s. 8d. and a Thanksgiving Sermon"; "for Mr. Winchester's preaching, six days, £8"; and "for Mr. Hemingways' one day's preaching, £1 6s. 8d." At the same date it was "voted to proceed to settle a minister in Said Township and ordered the Committee to Gett Mr. Winchester on probation." Whether or not Mr. Winchester came "on probation" does not appear. It is certain, however, that he did not receive a "call" to settle. Nor did any one for more than two years. Meanwhile the pulpit was supplied by Messrs. Mellen, Farrar, Wheeler, Belcher, Hancock, Gardner, Swift, Goss, Lovering, Harrington, Rawlins, Frink, Rice, Whitney, and perhaps others; some of whom were settled ministers in the vicinity. At length, on the 21st of September, 1760, at a meeting of the inhabitants of the district "the vote was called for whether they will concur with the church in the choice of Mr. Samuel Dix for to be their minister and it Passed In the Affirmative By a Grate Majority." It was also voted that "In case Mr. Samuel Dix accepts of the Call to settle with us he shall have £133 6s. 8d. for a settlement" and "£55 yearly for a Sallery so long as he continues to be our Minnister." But Mr. Dix did not see fit to accept their call, and a year later Mr. Peter Thatcher Smith was similarly honored, with a similar result. On the 9th of September, 1762, the district again concurred with the church in the choice of Mr. Samuel Frink for their minister, offering him £160 for a settlement and £66 13s. 4d. for a salary. Again were the people disappointed, and they waited a year and a half before taking further action in the matter. On the 14th of February, 1764, Mr. Samuel Cotton received a "call" with an offer of £133 6s. 8d. for a settlement and a salary of £66 13s. 4d.,



which was afterwards augmented to the extent of thirty cords of wood as an additional consideration. But it was without avail. The next person invited to the vacant pastorate was Mr. John Wyeth, who followed the example of his four predecessors and declined. Probably the inharmonious condition of the people and the still existing feuds growing out of the Marsh difficulties had much to do with these several declinations,—a church and town rent by religious divisions and animosities not being a very inviting field to a true minister of a gospel of “peace on earth and good will to men.”

In addition to the several persons who had received favorable consideration during the three or four years covered by the narration just given, the people had listened to Messrs. Fessenden, Sparhawk, Emerson, Roulding (?), Davis, and Putnam, but none of them were regarded with sufficient interest to warrant the attempt to secure them for a permanent settlement. A good impression, however, as early as 1759 had been made by Mr. Asaph Rice, in which year, December 24th, the committee on pulpit supply had been instructed to employ him and Mr. Hancock—presumably Rev. John, afterward of Lexington, and uncle of the patriot bearing the same name—and Jobe Whitney “three Sabbaths each.” After the several ineffectual efforts to obtain a minister adverted to, the public mind seemed to turn to him as the most acceptable of the twenty or more candidates who had been “tried and found wanting” in some of the qualities deemed requisite in a minister for the place. He received, in due ecclesiastical form, an invitation from the church to settle, and July 19, 1765, the district “voted to Concur with the Church in the choice of Mr. Asaph Rice for their Minister.” On the same day it was also “voted to give him £133 6s. 8d. for his settlment” and “voted to give him £66 13s. 4d. and thirty cords of wood annually in Case he, the Said Mr. Rice, Excepts [accepts] the offer and Settelleth in Westminster.” Much to the relief and gratification no doubt of all concerned, Mr. Rice responded affirmatively to the invitation, and at a meeting held Sept. 4th, the 20th of the next month, October, was fixed upon for the ordination services. Six pounds were voted to Captain Hoar for the cost of entertaining the council, and an equal sum was appropriated for other expenses incident to the occasion.

**Ministry of Rev. Asaph Rice.** The ordination took place as arranged. Rev. Eli Forbes of Brookfield, an intimate friend of the pastor elect, by whom he had been induced to enter the ministry and with whom he had pursued his theological studies, preaching the sermon. The subject of the discourse was: “The Evangelical Preacher’s Determination.” It was published, and a copy of it yet extant has furnished a few extracts for insertion here. If it reflects in any proper sense the sentiments of Mr. Rice, it is evident that those people who had





been disturbed by the more liberal views of the first minister of the place, had now a pastor after their own heart and could rest their souls in peace.

#### EXTRACTS FROM SERMON.

"For I am determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. 1 Cor. 2: 2."

After a brief introduction, treating of the city of Corinth, its place in the commercial and literary world, its moral and spiritual degradation, and the labors of the great apostle to the Gentiles therein, the preacher proceeds to the subject matter of his discourse, only a few points of which can be inserted here, to wit:

"The Christian Preacher will not usurp dominion over men's Consciences, nor impose his own sentiments as matters of Faith." "He will delight to make frequent Mention of that dear and venerable name—the Lord Jesus Christ." "He will dwell much on his Deity, his Incarnation and the distinguishing Doctrines of his Atonement." "He will also explain, prove, and apply the Doctrines of Christ's Resurrection, Exaltation, & Session on the Right Hand of God." "He will dwell with Zeal and Delight upon the power and grace of Christ, that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, that he is as willing as he is able." "He will display before his hearers the amiable and divine Example of the blessed Jesus as the unerring pattern of the Christian Life, that a faith in Christ which is saving will produce a Christian Temper and Conduct, and that only those who are Conformed to Christ here can be exalted to eternal glory with him hereafter." "Other Doctrines he will preach—the Guilt and Depravity of human Nature, Regeneration & the Perseverance of the Saints." "Nor will the Christian Preacher omit inculcating the great and unalterable Rules of Morality and the Doctrines of Natural Religion in their Place and Order, and as they receive an additional Force and Beauty from the Light of Christianity."

The sermon closed with addresses to "My very Revered and much esteemed Fathers and Brethren in the Ministry" to "My well-beloved brother, Pastor elect, and now to be constituted Evangelical Preacher in this place," to the church and congregation, whom he characterizes as "Dearly beloved and longed for" and to "this numerous and crowded assembly." He expresses to the young minister great confidence

"That you will not come to this People . . . with the empty harangues of mere Speculation, in which you will aim chiefly at Pomp of Words, Affected Eloquence, or the nice Arrangement of Ideas and grammatical Argumentation, . . . nor warm yourself with unhallowed Fire, . . . that you will not gird on the sword of the Civil Magistrate, but instead put on the whole Armor of God and manfully oppose the Enemy of Christ and his Cause with Spiritual Weapons, preach Jesus Christ and the Doctrines of his Cross, make known the Glory of his Person, the Excellency and Beauty of his Mediatorial Character, displaying before Sinners the Power and Grace of the Redeemer, urge his Precepts and illustrate his example as the Standard of Gospel Obedience and the only unerring Pattern of the Christian Life." "That you will not satisfy yourself with only reading Lectures of Morality but preach the Everlasting Gospel, beseech sinful



men in the meekness of Wisdom, to be reconciled to God, urge the Doctrines of Moral Virtue in an Evangelical Strain in order that you may prevail with your People to live as the Grace of God teaches and the Eternal Laws of Reason demand."

To the people of the new minister's charge, the preacher says:

"We congratulate you upon the happy Prospects which this joyful Day opens upon you,—the peaceful Re-Settlement of the Gospel Ministry among you. Behold the Man on whom you have set your Heart and Eye as a Gift of your Compassionate and ascended Savior. Do all that in you lies that he may not labor in vain, that both he and you may live together as Heirs of the Grace of God, and rejoice together in the Heavenly world."

Mr. Rice was unmarried at the time of his ordination, but took to himself a wife on the 26th of the following December. With this event in view and for the purpose of establishing a home for himself and family, he purchased on the 28th of October of Joseph Hosley, lot No. 9, adjoining that of Rev. Mr. Marsh on the west, with a street front extending from the common to the line still recognizable near the barn of E. L. Burnham's Forbush place. Upon the northeast corner of this lot he very soon began the erection of a dwelling house, which he occupied the following year, and which continued to be his residence while he lived. Its exact site was a little east of the present home of Reuben P. Merriam on Meetinghouse Hill.

The salary of Mr. Rice was regularly voted him agreeably to the original terms of his settlement for about thirty years, or until April, 1794, when, upon condition of his relinquishing all his rights in ministerial lands, the amount was raised from £66 13s. 4d. to £90, which sum, or its equivalent in United States money, \$300, was continued to the year of his death. No wood was furnished him during his first year's residence in the place, presumably for the reason that himself and wife boarded for that period with some one of his parishioners. Afterwards it was provided for by a special tax, and furnished by persons bidding it off at the lowest rates at public vendue, usually in fifteen lots of two cords each.

To give those of the present day some idea of the habits and customs of the earlier times in regard to church affairs, it is in order to state that under date of Jan. 27, 1762, Richard Graves was chosen "a Commity to Dignify and Seete the meeting house" according to "the last valuation of Real Estate." On the 1st of the next March it was "voted to Give Capt. Daniel Hoar, William Edgell, and David Bemis, a Seat in the Meeting house according to Pay." Three years later, having found perhaps that the dignity of the meetinghouse was not determined or secured by basing it upon financial contributions, the rule was so far modified as to have the seating arranged "according to Real and personal Estate upon the three Last years Invoice, Haveing regard to Age and Honour."





A misunderstanding on the part of Mr. Rice in regard to the ministerial lands occasioned, early in his pastorate, considerable discussion and very likely some irritation of feeling, though without resulting in any serious inharmony or disaffection. It will be remembered that in the original laying out and distribution of house lots, one of said lots was set apart "for the first Minister" and one "for the ministry." The former, No. 8, had been assigned to Mr. Marsh, who had occupied and disposed of it, as he had also of the after divisions drawn upon it,—the whole amounting to about two hundred acres; he being rightful owner of the same, according to the design of the proprietors. The latter, or ministerial lot, as it was termed, No. 95, with its after divisions, was still held as common land belonging to the town. Mr. Rice, innocently no doubt, assumed that all these lands were for his personal benefit as minister, and that he had a right to use and improve them as he saw fit. He therefore proceeded to take timber from them or otherwise to make them accrue to his advantage, whereupon he was confronted by the town acting pursuant to the following article in the warrant calling a meeting Nov. 15, 1773, to wit:—"To Know the minds of the Inhabitants whether they will take some Effectuall method to prevent Trespass on the ministerial Land." When the matter came up for consideration, it was voted "that Deacon Wood, Esq. Brigden, and Mr. Fosket, be a Committee to Weight on Mr. Rice in the afaire and make Report in one Hower." The committee at once had a conference with the minister and reported "that Mr. Rice Still Continueth his Right of Title in the minesterial Lands but will make no wast of Timber, or dont Intend att present to Improve above twenty or thirty acres of said Right." This was not satisfactory, and the matter was referred back to the committee for adjustment agreeably to the wishes of the town. Nothing, however, was accomplished by them, and two months later, Jan. 10, 1774, they were instructed "to apply to Mr. Rice and Signifie to him that the Town Disapprove of his Improving the minesterial Lands without Liberty from the Town, and if Mr. Rice will Relinquish his pretensions to said Land by Clame of Right and Improve under certain Restrictions from the Town then said Committee to Desist and proceade no further, but if he still Continues his Right of Clame, then said Committee to apply to an Experienced attorney and Take the Best advice that can be had and Report to the Town."

But Mr. Rice was not convinced of his error and refused to yield his claim. Whereupon, at the annual meeting, the committee were directed "to reject Mr. Asaph Rice out of the minestearial Land." Whether this extreme measure was carried into effect or not, does not appear, but probably there was legal authority for adopting it. Obviously the purpose of the proprietors in assigning lands "for the ministry" was to aid



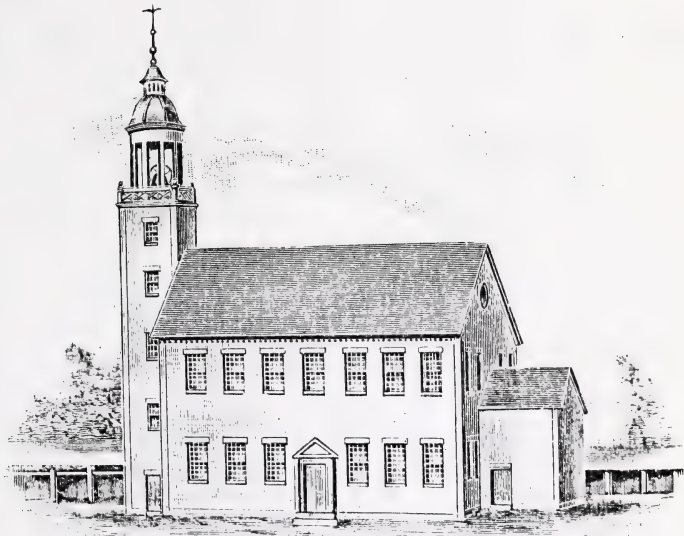
the town and not the minister as Mr. Rice supposed, and as he still claimed in spite of the opposition raised against him.

Not long after the transactions spoken of occurred, the lands in question were sold, as elsewhere stated, and the proceeds were invested for the town's advantage and help in support of the preaching of the Gospel. But Mr. Rice was still unconvinced and dissatisfied. On the 30th of October, 1782, he preferred a formal request that the town "come to a Just and honorable Settlement with me respecting the Ministerial Land, the use and Improvement of which was part of the Encouragement given me for Settling in the ministry in Westminster." The town acknowledged no obligation on its part in this particular, and summarily dismissed the request. At several different times during the next ten years did Mr. Rice make a similar request with a similar result. At length, on the 20th of January, 1794, the matter in controversy was brought to a final adjustment by the action of the town voting and granting "twenty three pounds six shillings and eight pence as an addition to the Rev. Mr. Rice's Sallery annually so long as he is able to Supply the pulpit in this Town on Condition of his giving a Discharge to the Town of all Right and Title that he pretends to have or ever had to the ministerial Land in Westminster." This proposition being accepted by Mr. Rice, the long-existing difficulty was brought to a perpetual end.

But though this difference of opinion and seeming clashing of interests prevailed for many years, yet happily for all concerned it did not produce anything like bitterness of feeling or open hostility. The people, so far as can be ascertained, held their minister in high regard all the while and treated him with respectful consideration and kindly thoughtfulness. They made due allowance for the changes in public affairs that were unfavorable to him, voting him an addition to his salary in times of special emergency, occasioned by an increase in the cost of the necessaries of life, or by a depreciation in the value of the currency. Instances of their kindness and generosity possess a varied interest, illustrating as they do, not only the spirit of the people in their relations to their minister, but something, too, of the state of the times and the difficulties which in the struggle of life then beset both minister and people alike. A few citations will show this.

In May, 1778, as prices rose and the purchasing power of money decreased, the town voted £100 extra salary to Mr. Rice, and in December, only eight months afterwards, £233 6s. 8d. were granted in addition to the stipulated annual compensation. In the following July £200 more were voted him, the last two sums belonging to the same parochial year. Dec. 13, 1779 the town "voted and granted £1333 6s. 8d. for the Rev. Mr Rice's Sallery for the year Lately Commenced, Including his usuall Sallery of £66 13s. 4d., and such as shall





SECOND MEETING-HOUSE, ERECTED 1787.





Chuse to pay one twentieth part of their proportion of Money now Granted as shall be assessed to them and pay it in the Necessarys of Life, all Sasse Excepted, at the current Price sold for in the year 1774, shall have that Liberty and it shall be in full for their said Tax." On the 22d of November, 1780, "voted and granted £4666 13s. 4d. as an addition to the Rev Mr Rice's Sallery for the last Year which ended Last October." This made £6000 for the year 1779-80, which shows how thoroughly demoralized the currency had become at that date. By a fortuitous change in financial affairs the balance of things was shortly after restored and the salary reverted to its former amount.

**The Second Meetinghouse.** As the smoke and dust of the Revolutionary War cleared away and the people, resuming the ordinary duties and obligations of social and civil life incident to times of peace, began to realize what their circumstances and needs were and what was the outlook for the future, they very soon came to the conclusion that one of the first things to receive attention was to provide enlarged and improved facilities for public worship. The old sanctuary of the founders of the town had served an excellent purpose in its day. But its limited dimensions, ample enough to begin with, had been wholly outgrown, although, by increasing its seating capacity from time to time till every available foot of room had been brought into requisition, it had been made to accommodate the greater part of the population. Moreover, it had been for some years much neglected, and therefore was greatly dilapidated and out of repair, necessitating large expenditures at an early day to fit it for continued use. And furthermore, new settlers were coming in to multiply the number of inhabitants and make the insufficiency of the old edifice more manifestly evident. All of which things helped to prove the necessity of a new place of worship and to determine the minds of the people in favor of its erection. The enterprise once started grew rapidly in public favor, and in a brief space of time ripened to its consummation.

The first movement looking to the result indicated appeared in the form of an article in the warrant for a town meeting to be held Oct. 26, 1784, viz.: "To know their minds whether they will Build a new meetinghouse and what method they will come into with Regard to Building the same." Upon this article it was summarily voted "not to Build a meetinghouse." The same action was taken twice in the spring of the following year, 1785. But on the 6th of March, 1786, when the subject was for the fourth time brought up in due form, it was

"Voted to build a new meeting house, then voted to set the meeting house on this common near this place, [where the old one stood]. Then voted to chuse a Committee to Draw a plan for a New meeting house and Chose Ruben Sawin, Capt Bigelow and Tim<sup>o</sup> Howard [Heywood] and Report."



### At an adjourned meeting two weeks afterward

"On Debate a motion was made and Tryed to Reconsider the vote with Regard to Building a meeting house and the house was poled on Return of the number for building said house was 63, the number against building was 34, majority for building was 29." "Then a motion was made to see if the Town would Chuse a Committee to ascertain the middle of the Town and voted they would not.

"Voted that the Committee that was Chose the last meeting make Report of the plan of the meeting house.

"Voted to adjourn the plan of the meeting house Relating to finishing the inside till May meeting, then voted to Except [accept] the bigness of the meeting house which is 60 feet long and 45 feet wide with two fourteen feet porches to stand at the ends and voted to Let out the meeting house to him or them that will Do it Cheapest, then voted to Chuse a Committee of 7 men to Draw up proposals Relating to the meterials for said house, then voted and Chose Capt. Bigelow, Dea. Miller, Col Dike, Lieut. Hoar, Lieut. Nathan Howard, Peter Graves, Ruben Sawin, then voted that the Committee Report on the first Monday of April."

At the time stated, April 3d, the committee reported as directed. The town

"Voted to Except [accept] of the Committee's Report which is as follows, Viz. 1st for the Town to alot out into Small Lotts the wood meterials for s<sup>d</sup> house and Lett it out att publick Sail to the Cheapest bidder to the amount of 3000 feet of Hew<sup>d</sup> Timber; and Slitwork to the amount of 8000 feet. Bords 35000 feet and Shingles thirty Thousand, Clabords five thousand and five hundred; the Stone for underpinning said House to be lett out in the same manner as the Timber by Lotts, and a Committee of three were chosen to Lott out the abovementioned meterials in quantity and Quality as shall be agreeable to the Town—the above Committee to Dig-nifie and sell the pews at Vandue on Such conditions as the Committee shall Judge best as also to Lot out the wood meterials for s<sup>d</sup> house in small Lotts and Sel it at publick Vandue to the Cheapest bidder."

Dea. Joseph Miller, Capt. Elisha Bigelow, and Reuben Sawin were chosen a committee to have charge of the matter agreeably to the recommendation of the report, and were instructed to make a statement of their allotments of material and of the numbering of the pews at an adjourned meeting.

On the 11th of May the town met as per adjournment, and it was voted "that the meeting house stand a little to the west of the old house." This was about midway between the two brick dwellings now seen at the eastern and western extremity of the old common, on the north side of the road, as the older people will remember.

At the same meeting the committee for allotting the material, so that it could be readily let to parties wishing to furnish it, reported, with all necessary specifications, 121 lots of lumber, 6 of stone, and 3 of doors—130 in all, which was deemed satisfactory by the town. The lumber was to be good and sound and "to be hewed, sawed or shaved in a workmanlike manner." The time of delivering the different classes of material was fixed, the latest date specified being June 10, 1787.





The committee also advised that the material be let out as previously ordered "on the first day of June next," 1786, "at the house of Abner Holden, Esq., in Westminster, to begin at 9 o'clock, A. M." The pews were to be offered for sale at the same time and place, the purchaser paying one-third the sum given for them by the last day of June, 1787, one-third by the first day of November, 1787, and the other third by the first day of November, 1788. Fifteen shillings, however, were to be deposited at the time of sale, or a note of hand for the same amount, to be forfeited in case the pews reverted to the town to be re-sold. Persons furnishing material were to be paid in three equal instalments at the above-named dates. The provisions of the report were accepted and the enterprise proceeded accordingly.

At the adjourned meeting, held June 1, 1786, before disposing of the pews, it was "voted that the pew next to the pulpit on the Left hand as we go into S<sup>d</sup> house be Reserved for a ministerial pew." The sale then went on in due form, resulting as indicated in the accompanying plan of the internal arrangement of the house, all of which was ratified by the town on the 3d of July following.

On this last-named date a committee consisting of Dea. Joseph Miller, Reuben Sawin, and Thomas Knower was appointed "to allot out the framing and finishing of the new meeting house and report to the Town" at a subsequent meeting. A vote to build a belfry at the east end of the edifice was afterwards rescinded.

The committee reported the allotment assigned to them, on the 29th of August, as follows :

- "1. Framing the House agreeable to a Draft to be provided by the town.
- "2. Inclosing and Shingling.
- "3. 44 window frames and 1640 Lights of sashes 7 by 9, 2 Compass Sashes 28 Lights each and one 1-2 Compass Sash.
- "4. Priming 1713 Lights of Sashes and Setting the glass..
- "5. Putting up the window Frames Clabbing and Compleating the outside.
- "6. The pulpit and Stairs and Cannipa.
- "7. 48 pews, six seats, and all the Joiner work in the main house below the gallerys floor fit for Lathing.
- "8. The breastwork, 24 pews and seats Conformable to the plan and all the Joiner work in the gallery fit for Lathing.
- "9. All the Joyner work in the porches with two pairs of Stairs in each fit for Lathing.
- "10. 108 Dozen of Bannesters for the pews.
- "11. Lathing and plastering.
- "12. Painting and Numbering the Pews."

The report was approved and the same committee were re-chosen to carry its provisions into effect.

At an adjourned meeting, held Oct. 10th, the committee on letting out the material for the building reported the result of their action in detail. The whole is duly tabulated in the



clerk's records, but would require too much space to warrant a place in this volume. The names only of the contracting parties are, therefore, presented: Joseph Miller, Josiah Conant, William Edgell, John Foscett, John Woodward, Jabez Bigelow, Sebez Jackson, Elisha Bigelow, Samuel Miller, Thomas Rand, Stephen Hoar, Oliver Jackson, Isaac Dupee, Samuel Hoar, Reuben Sawin, Nathan Miles, Timothy Damon, Ephraim Robbins, Isaac Williams, John Hoar, Ezra Holden, Jonas Miles, Stephen Miles, Paul Walker, Abner Holden, Jonathan Brown, Levi Holden, Joseph Holden, Nathaniel Wheeler, Joseph Smith, John Estabrooks, Jonas Whitney, Edward Jackson, Joel Miles, Nathan Darby, Daniel Sawin, Zachariah Rand, Jonathan Minott, Peter Graves, Elijah Hager, Asa Farnsworth.

The committee also reported the conditions upon which the foundation and doorstones of the building were to be furnished and put in place. Their action was approved, and the work was let to Abel Wood, Deacon Miller, Lieutenant Bigelow, Stephen Hoar, Joshua Bigelow, Captain Seaver, Isaac Williams, Samuel Miller, and Samuel Merriam; the underpinning to be made ready for the superstructure "by the 10th day of June, 1787, and the doorstones to be in position during the same month."

The material for the house having been provided for, as also its foundations, the committee having the matter in charge proceeded to make arrangements for its erection, according to the method already mentioned. The framing was let to Timothy Bacon; the enclosing and shingling to Norman Seaver; the window frames and sashes to Stephen Hoar, who also took the glazing; the putting in the window frames and clapboarding to John Hoar, and also the outside painting; but no one was found for some time to do the inside work.

On the 13th of March, 1787, a financial statement pertaining to the undertaking was made to the town, whereby it appeared that the pews had been sold, as heretofore noticed, for the aggregate sum of £718 16s., that the materials as let out, underpinning, etc., amounted to £153 7s., and the work so far provided for to £190, leaving of available funds yet unappropriated, £375 9s. A week later proposals for performing the remainder of the work on the house, including the cost of material, were submitted by a committee chosen for the purpose, accompanied by directions regarding the execution of the same. It was undertaken by Dea. Joseph Miller for £387 9s.,—£12 more than the amount arising from the sale of the pews in excess of the expenditure already made,—and was to be completed in a workmanlike manner, after the style of "the Leominster meetinghouse," by the first day of November, 1788.

At a meeting held May 15, 1787, it was voted to let out the raising of the meetinghouse to the lowest bidder, on condition that the person or persons contracting for the work shall pro-



cure all needful material and appliances therefor, and also the men, with no claims whatever upon the town in that respect. Under those conditions, Seth Herrington bid off the job for £90, and that sum was appropriated from the uncollected public taxes. Reuben Sawin, Deacon Miller, and Thomas Knower were subsequently made a committee "to Inspect the frame after it is raised and report to the town whether it is done in a workmanlike manner"; also, "to Inspect the finishing of the House till it is Done."

Provision having now been made for the erection and entire completion of the building without and within, the work went on during the years 1787 and 1788 to its final consummation with commendable rapidity. One fatal accident attended the putting up of the frame, July 31, 1787, marring the pleasures of the otherwise happy occasion, and attaching to it a painful memory in many minds for a long time afterward. Capt. Norman Seaver, an active and esteemed citizen, and a contractor for a certain portion of the work, by some mischance fell near the close of the day from a high position, sustaining injuries of which he soon after died.

As the structure drew near its completion, and the time was at hand when it was to be occupied for the purpose of Christian worship, the town voted, Nov. 3, 1788, to dispose of the old meetinghouse, and measures were adopted for carrying that vote into effect. The sale took place on the 17th of the same month, and was made in seven lots, amounting in the aggregate to £28 18s. 5d. The names of the purchasers were not recorded, but it is understood that Rev. Mr. Rice purchased the frame, and used it in the construction of a barn for himself,—some of the timbers of which were put into the more modern building of a similar nature now standing on the premises, where they give promise of good service for many a year to come. At the same meeting steps were taken towards the proper clearing of the common and putting of the grounds adjacent to the meetinghouse in order, so as to give them a neat and attractive appearance.

On the 8th of December, after the house was virtually completed, a new committee of inspection was chosen "to examine the work thoroughly and see if it was done in a satisfactory manner," entitling it to the acceptance of the town. Two weeks later this committee presented a favorable report which was approved, and Thursday, the first day of January, 1789, was fixed upon for the customary services of dedication. No record of those services has been found, but they are presumed to have taken place as provided for, agreeably to the ecclesiastical usages of the time, Rev. Mr. Rice preaching the sermon, and some of the neighboring ministers participating in the other exercises of the occasion.

This, the second meetinghouse of the town, as originally built,





was a plain, rectangular structure, sixty feet long by forty-five wide, with a porch at each end fourteen feet square, as already stated. Considerable regard was paid to architectural ornamentation in the finish of its exterior, the specifications therefor providing liberally for dentals, moldings, "moredillions," and other devices pleasing to the eye and taste, properly distributed and applied. A large door with eighteen panels, flanked by double pillars and heavily capped, broke the monotony of the front at its center, while each porch had two doors, one of nine panels and one of six panels, with a corresponding setting, making five entrances to the interior. The structure had forty-four rectangular windows in its main part, two circular windows in its gables, and a half circular window surmounting a large one of the usual form in the rear of the pulpit.

The interior of the house was arranged and finished according to the fashion of the time in respect to places of public worship. In the center of the rear part of the main floor stood the high pulpit, over which a broad canopy or sounding board extended, always the marvel and sometimes the terror of children who feared it might fall with a crash and produce disastrous results, and in front of which was the deacons' seat, whence those guardians of the church could keep watch and ward of the whole congregation. Next to the walls of the building and entirely encircling the interior space, except at the entrances and where the pulpit stood, was a series of high-partitioned pews, some five or five and a half feet square, thirty in all—the one at the right of the pulpit and adjoining the flight of stairs leading thereto being assigned by town vote to the minister for the use of his family. Similar pews occupied three-fourths of the available space in the middle of the floor, arranged in tiers of three each on each side of the broad aisle which extended from the front door to the pulpit; the other fourth, nearest to the pulpit, being taken up with six long seats, three on a side, reserved for common use, and held as the common property of the town. At a later day four of these long seats were converted into as many pews which, like those already built, became subject to private ownership, leaving the two nearest the pulpit for people who were infirm or deaf. Besides the broad aisle mentioned, a narrow passageway made the entire circuit of the house in front of the pulpit and wall pews, and one was also opened from porch to porch through the center, giving easy access to every part of the main floor.

Broad galleries ran across the ends and along the front of the building, ascent to which was gained by stairways from the porch on either hand. Skirting the walls of these galleries there were twenty-two pews, corresponding, for the most part, to those already described directly below. In front of and separated from them by a continuous passage, was a series of three rows of seats of varying length—some of them very long—



extending around the open space in the center of the house. These seats at the right and left, when regarded from the pulpit, were designed for, and occupied by, aged men and women, respectively, who had no pews of their own, while the front ones were, after a time, assigned to the use of the singers, of whom there was usually a goodly company.

The pews, as stated, were nearly square, box-like apartments, enclosed by paneled joinery, which was surmounted with a neat balustrade reaching above the heads of the congregation. They had seats upon three sides hung with hinges, so as to be raised and give more room when the people stood during the long prayer, as was the custom of the time. The lowering of the seats at the close of that part of the service produced a half-deafening rattle and clatter throughout the house, not infrequently prolonged and emphasized by the carelessness of the adult worshiper, or the mischief-making propensity of the inadequately trained boy or girl of smaller or of larger growth.

There were on the lower floor at first forty-eight pews, and fifty-two at a later day; in the gallery, to begin with, twenty-four, which were increased to twenty-nine, making, finally, eighty-one in all. It would seem that the original plan of the house provided for separate seats in the gallery for colored people, of whom there were a few in town, but this plan was changed and made more Christian before the structure was completed. This appears from the record of a meeting of the citizens held July 28, 1788, at which it was voted "to make the Seats Reserved for Nègrows into pews, said pews to be sold at a Vandue."

The pews, aside from the one at the right of the pulpit, which was set apart for the use of the minister's family, seventy-one in number, were all disposed of either before or soon after the house was ready for occupancy. Nearly every family in town was supplied with one (a few having more than one); those who were not, finding accommodations in the seats designated for common use. The table which is hereto appended will show not only who the purchasers were, and (with the aid of the accompanying plan) where their pews were located, but also, for the most part, who were the residents in town at the date under notice. The prices of pews on the main floor ranged from \$31 to \$66; of those in the gallery, from \$16 to \$30.

#### ORIGINAL PEW-HOLDERS IN THE SECOND MEETINGHOUSE.

##### LOWER FLOOR — WALL PEWS.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Name.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Name.</i>
1	Capt. Elisha Bigelow.	8	Thomas Rand.
2	Capt. Norman Seaver.	9	Reuben Sawin.
3	Edmund Barnard.	10	Edmund Barnard.
4	Lieut. John Hoar.	11	Ahijah Wood.
5	Capt. Wm. Edgell.	12	Edward Jackson.
6	Thomas Knower.	13	James Cowee.
7	Edmund Barnard.	14	Elijah Hager.





<i>No.</i>	<i>Name.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Name.</i>
15	Edmund Barnard.	23	Samuel Hoar.
16	Lieut. Peletiah Everett.	24	Asa Farnsworth.
17	Ahijah Wood.	25	Sebez Jackson.
18	Stephen Hoar.	26	Thomas Merriam.
19	Capt. Wm. Mills.	27	Joshua Bigelow.
20	Thaddeus Bond.	28	Dea. Joseph Miller.
21	Capt. Wm. Edgell.	29	Edmund Barnard.
22	Nathan Miles.		

## LOWER FLOOR—CENTRAL SECTION.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Name.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Name.</i>
1	Capt Nathan Whitney.	10	Stephen Hoar.
2	Jonas Miles.	11	Lieut. Jabez Bigelow.
3	Caleb Parker.	12	Nathan Miles.
4	Capt. Elisha Bigelow.	13	Asa Taylor.
5	Capt. Wm. Edgell.	14	Seth Herrington.
6	Abner Whitney.	15	Abel Wood.
7	Capt. Wm. Edgell.	16	John Hoar.
8	Isaac Williams.	17	Thomas Merriam.
9	Joseph Holden.	18	Lieut. Jabez Bigelow.

## GALLERY.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Name.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Name.</i>
1	Capt. Samuel Sawin.	13	Dr. Daniel Bartlett.
2	Silas Perry.	14	Jonas Miles.
3	Capt. Elisha Bigelow.	15	Abel Wood.
4	Nathan Cutting.	16	Capt. Wm. Mills.
5	Lieut. Samuel Gerrish.	17	Nathan Miles.
6	Reuben Blood.	18	Jonadab Baker.
7	Nathan Miles.	19	Samuel Miller.
8	Asa Farnsworth.	20	Nathan Miles.
9	Capt Wm. Mills.	21	Isaac Dupee.
10	Jonathan Minott.	22	Capt Elisha Bigelow.
11	Nathaniel Wheeler.	23	Stephen Hoar.
12	David Cohee.	24	Peter Graves.

It has been stated that the town at one time voted to have a belfry attached to the new meetinghouse, but that the idea was afterward abandoned—the structure being erected and finished without that characteristic feature. Nevertheless the people, or some of them at least, seem not to have been altogether satisfied with this decision, and, as a consequence, the project, nearly twenty years afterward, was again considered. In a warrant calling a town meeting, Oct. 6, 1806, an article was inserted

“To see if the Town will Build a Bellcony to the meeting-house and act anything thereon as they may Judge Best.”

Upon this article it was

“*Voted* to Build a Bellcony, voted to Build said Bellcony at the west End of the meeting-house.

“*Voted* that the materials Be provided this winter and said Building be put up in the Spring as early as the season will allow.”



A committee consisting of Stephen Hoar, Jonas Miles, Abel Wood, Esq., Dr. Benjamin Marshall, and Jonathan Minott was chosen "to conduct said Building," "the form and fashion" of which was left with them. At a subsequent meeting held Nov. 3d, an attempt was made to annul this action but without avail, and the sum of \$500 was appropriated to enable the committee to carry it into effect.

The belfry was put up as contemplated, giving to the structure, as a whole, a much more imposing, as well as a more ecclesiastical, appearance externally, and making it comport more fully with the importance and dignity of the town at that period of its history. The work was contracted for by Mr. Isaac Williams, it is understood, who was assisted in its execution by Capt. Wm. Edgell. Aside from other uses which this annex subserved, it furnished room for two additional pews in the rear of the west gallery, one of which was sold to Nathan Raymond, the other to Timothy Hoar. A bell, procured by private subscription, without doubt, as the town made no appropriation for that object, was placed in it very soon after its completion. From that time onward the care of the meetinghouse was supplemented by the ringing of the bell, both being provided for at the annual town meeting, and thenceforth the people were summoned to the duties of the sanctuary by the chimes which went forth with each returning Sabbath from its high, commanding tower. At an early date the custom was established of having the bell rung at noon, and at 9 o'clock in the evening of each day in the week except Sunday, and also "toll'd" whenever a death occurred in the place, the sex as well as the age of the deceased being indicated by well-known symbols. And this custom has been regarded in every feature of it until within a recent period, the 12 M. and 9 P. M. bells being given up at the time of the placing a clock upon the house of worship belonging to the Baptist Society. Two religious bodies having had, for some years, a bell of their own, the needs of the public in that regard are adequately supplied.

**Ministry of Rev. Asaph Rice—resumed.** The people of the most northerly section of the town, by reason of their great distance from the meetinghouse and the badness of the roads leading thereto, were obliged to forego to a large extent the privileges of the public worship of God and the benefits of public religious instruction. That they should have felt the loss thereby sustained, the more devout and spiritually-minded of them very deeply, was most natural and reasonable as well. Very likely it was this feeling, in part at least, which actuated them in uniting with their neighbors of other towns close by in the movement for the formation of a new township, which involved the erection of a sanctuary in their very midst, the details of which are given elsewhere in this work. Indeed, this is made to appear very clearly in the petition for the incor-



poration of the said new township sent by them and their coadjutors to the General Court in February, 1791. In urging their claims to favorable consideration, they say that "in their unhappy Situation, their aged and infirm, their women and children and indeed all the inhabitants of the said tract for a considerable part of the Season are in a great measure Deprived of the previledge of public Worship, an institution [upon which] the Happiness of Society, Life, the interest of Civil government and the Blessings of Religious instruction and improvement so graitley Depends."

The citizens of Westminster at large were not unmindful of the privations of their fellow-townfolk in this respect, nor indisposed to grant them some measure of relief. Sixteen years before this petition to the Legislature was drawn up, April 6, 1774, when there were scarcely more than a dozen families in all that section, upon an appeal based upon the existing needs in this particular, the town voted "that the Rev. Mr. Rice preach four Sabbaths the year Insueing in the Northerly part of the Town and that Mr. Rice and the northerly people agree to the perticular Days on which they shall have preaching." It does not appear that this vote was ever carried into effect. In fact, the remonstrance to the petition for a new town states that it was not, by reason of the indifference or neglect of the northerly people themselves, and intimates that they were insincere in bringing forward their religious privations in support of their cause before the General Court, inasmuch as they did not at the time mentioned accept the offer of the town, but "let the aged, the women and children," in whose spiritual welfare for time and eternity they professed so much interest, "come of as they might."

Nevertheless, when these "northerly people," with the aid of their allies in Fitchburg, Ashburnham, and Ashby, had erected a house of worship, such as it was, at their own expense, and came before their fellow citizens with a formal request that "the Town will Excuse from ministerial Taxes, us, the Subscribers, our poles and Estates, in whole or in part, for a Limited or unlimited time, provided we Lay out the same to hire a Gospel Minister to preach in the House that we have arected for the publick Worship," it was voted Oct. 18, 1792, "that the Rev. Mr. Rice preach in the northeasterly part of the town five Sabbaths the present year when it will best convean," that is, be most convenient for those concerned. This was the last action taken by the town, so far as can be learned, with regard to providing the section of the town under notice with special ministrations of the gospel as then understood. Occasional religious services were held in the building constructed for the purpose at Laws' corner, as elsewhere set forth, but the families generally either retained their old ecclesiastical relations or formed new ones, the privileges and duties of which could be more





conveniently and easily shared, or in which they found more congenial fellowship and a better opportunity of expressing and promoting their convictions of Christian truth and righteousness. Some there were, no doubt, as in other localities, who, as time went on and the legal obligations to support religious institutions fell into abeyance or were removed, severed their connection with all ecclesiastical bodies, affiliating with none and owning allegiance to none of any kind or name whatsoever.

In this connection, it may be said that it was during the period of the town's history covered by the last few pages that signs began to appear of that religious disintegration which resulted many years after in the entire surrender of the control of ecclesiastical affairs by the town, as provided for by a change in the statutes of the Commonwealth; the disruption of the original church and society; and the consequent formation of the several different denominational bodies which for more than half a century have had a place in the community. The first indications of this as yet mostly undreamed of revolution appear at the end of an old ministerial tax list for the year 1784, made out by Capt. Elisha Bigelow, Capt. William Edgell, and Abner Holden, assessors, in the following explanatory note: "Josiah Wheeler and John Martine and their Estates Exempted out of this Rate on ye Baptis principles agreeable to the Constitution." Subsequently thereto these men were not included in the list of ministerial tax-payers, the assessors probably acting year by year according to the dictates of their own judgment in the matter. At length, on the 19th of January, 1796, the question of such omission came before the town for the consideration and final action of its citizens. Whereupon it was voted "that Mr. Josiah Wheeler and Mr. Martyn Bring a Certificate from a regular Teacher certifying that they Belong to his Church and Do attend—in that case the assessors are hereby Directed to abate there minister Taxes." It is to be presumed that these persons acted in accordance with this vote, inasmuch as their names continued to be omitted from the ministerial rates. No other instances of a similar nature are recorded for about eighteen years, at the expiration of which time new ones appeared in greatly increased numbers, as will be more fully set forth hereafter.

No records have been found relating in any way to the matter of music as a part of the public religious service, for many years after the settlement of the town and the founding of the church. No doubt there was singing, or what went by the name, but of a crude, primitive character, both in form and quality. It probably was conducted after the fashion of the time, the minister announcing the psalm by its appropriate number, and one of the deacons reading it, one or two lines at a time, the congregation responding by chanting in a certain



way what had been read, as they remembered it,—the reading and chanting, or so-called singing, going on alternately to the end. No musical instruments were used, save, perhaps, a pitch-pipe, and no tune books or any printed or written forms of musical notation. It is easy to conceive that this part of the service lacked sometimes both sweetness and harmony, though it undoubtedly was heartily rendered and served well its purposed end. There are no means of determining what psalm-book was first used here in the service of the house of worship. Possibly it was Sternhold and Hopkins' version, issued in England about 1650, or more likely, perhaps, the New England version, published in 1640. Whichever it may have been, a change was made in 1773, when the town voted "to sing Tate and Brady's Salms and Dr. Wattses Himms in Publick or Social worship." And this collection probably continued in use until superseded by Doctor Watts' "Psalms of David," with supplementary hymns, a volume well remembered by the older inhabitants.

At what date a special class or choir of singers was formed to carry on this part of the service, it has been found impossible to ascertain. The first action of the town upon the subject of sacred music was taken March 1, 1773, when it

*"Voted and chose Thomas Brigden Esq. and messirs Lemuel Houghton, Stephen Holden, Abraham Stone, Moses Thirsten, John Hoar Joseph Holden, Jr. Reuben Miles, Nathaniel Brown Samuel Cooke Sebez Jackson as Modelators of the Tune on Lords Days in times of Divine Service."*

The article in the warrant under which these men were appointed provided for the assignment of "a place for them to set in," and the selectmen were instructed "to make an alteration in the Front gallery on the wimmen's side," in order to meet the implied necessity.

Again, on the 2d of March, 1778, the town

*"Voted that Thanks be Returned to Mr Houghton for his Service Tuning the psalm on Lords Days and Voted To Chuse a number of persons to Tune the psalm on Lords Days Then Voted and Chose messirs Sebez Jackson, Lieut. John Hoar, Joseph Holden, John Fosket, David Nichols, Isaac Williams, Paul Walker, David Foster, Nathan Darby."*

In the warrant for a town meeting, three weeks later, was an article

*"To see whether they [the voters] will give the two hind Seats in the meetinghouse on the frunt side in the men's and wimen's side To accomidate the Singers."*

Whereupon it was

*"Voted to give the Seats mentioned in this article to accomidate the Singers and Voted to build them on the Town's Cost, and Voted to chuse three as a Committee to build said pews, and Voted that Said Committee make an Equail Division in the Pews for men and wimen and that those who are already appointed Singers to take Said Seates when finished*





and that they to Invite any into said Seates who are Singers till Said pews are filled and to continue their till the further order of the Town."

Some change in the location of the choir seems to have been desired the following year, 1779, since it was

"*Voted* that the Singers have the Benefitt of the four hind seats in the front Gallery on the Men's & Women's side instead of the Seats they now Sit in, etc."

At a later date, of which no record has been found, these servants of the sanctuary were given the occupancy of the front seats in the front gallery, opposite the pulpit, a position they retained while the house was used as a place of public worship.

In the interest of proper decorum in the house of God it was, May 26, 1780,

"*Voted* that those that sett in the Galleries of the Meeting House on Lords days be Desired to move out in order & that those in the front seats move out first & those in the Other seats move out in Order Successively."

The introduction of a musical instrument as an aid to singing was a matter of serious concern, requiring the consideration and consent of the whole body of the people, and the question of such an introduction came before the town at a meeting held March 2, 1795. After due deliberation, it was "voted and admitted that a Bassvial be brought into the meeting-house on Sundays for the purpose of assisting in the music on Said Day till the adjournment of this meeting," that is, for one month, presumably to test the feeling of the community upon the matter. As no further action was taken for some years in regard to it, or until the town voted March 7, 1808, "to purchase a Bass Viol to be used in publick worship," it is to be assumed that the instrument found favor with the majority and was permitted to remain as a help to the musical exercises of the Sabbath. Tradition, however, reports that there was much opposition to the innovation in certain quarters, provoking some ill-feeling which fortunately was not of long continuance and was accompanied by no serious results. It is said, for instance, that two of the daughters of Mr. Nathan Darby, excellent singers and general favorites in town, were so shocked at what they deemed the profanation of the place by the presence of the innocent instrument, that for several Sundays they refused to go into the house until after the singing exercises preceding the sermon were over, and retired when the last hymn was announced, in order to manifest their proper disapproval of the innovation and to free themselves of all responsibility in regard to it. After a time, having satisfied their consciences in the matter, their prejudices gave way and their opposition also, and they yielded graciously to the inevitable, as did others sym-



pathizing with them, and all things went on quietly as before. The bass viol had come into the meetinghouse "to stay."

There are some things to be found in the town records which suggest the supposition that the health of Rev. Mr. Rice began to give way while yet not very far advanced in life. For this, or some other less probable reason, the town in 1796 instructed the selectmen "to engage Mr. Wyth to preach two Sabbaths," an occurrence not likely to take place in those days but for some special reason like that indicated. Mr. Rice was again relieved from the continuous discharge of the duties of his office in 1798, the town voting "to give Mr. Payson 10 Dollars for three days preaching" during that year. On the 4th of March, 1805, the minister was granted "Liberty to take three or four Sundays to himself this year if he pleases." This was before the time of ministerial vacations and must be accounted for on other grounds than those that might be assigned in modern days. Nov. 9, 1807, "voted to have but one exercise on the Sabbath from Dec. 1, to March 1, [said] exercise to begin at eleven O'Clock." A similar vote was passed three years later.

That Mr. Rice was breaking down and becoming too feeble to do his proper work through the year had become clearly apparent in 1811, in which year, Nov. 14th, the people were asked "to hire a Candidate to supply the pulpit a part of the time this winter if Mr. Rice should not be able," answering by formal vote in the affirmative, and granting \$150 to defray the expenses thereof. Pursuant thereto, Mr. Isaac Jones was employed five Sabbaths, and other ministers, whose names are not at hand, for varying lengths of time. A year later Joseph Haven, Samuel Sewall, and Abraham Randall were paid for similar service.

Early in 1813 it became evident that the infirmities of Mr. Rice had so increased as to oblige him to give up preaching for the most part, and that it was necessary to obtain some one as permanent colleague with him in the ministerial office. Extra money was granted for the payment of candidates, and different persons serving in that capacity were heard. The Rev. Garrett G. Brown was received with favor, and the church gave him a call, which was concurred in by the town, at a meeting held Dec. 13th. The terms offered as salary were \$400 per year during the lifetime of Mr. Rice, \$500 thereafter, until the expiration of ten years from the date of his ordination, then \$550 as long as he remained the settled minister of the town. Whenever two-thirds of the citizens should vote to dismiss him "the contract should be considered at an end." Mr. Brown seems not to have been satisfied with the pecuniary consideration named, but the town refused to increase it and he declined the invitation.

The following August, the town voted to concur with the church in a call to Rev. William Bascom to settle as colleague



with Rev. Mr. Rice, at a salary of \$650 a year. This was also declined. But five months later, Jan. 9, 1815, a similar honor was extended to Mr. Cyrus Mann from Orford, N. H., who was just entering upon the work of the Christian ministry, with a stipulated salary of \$600. The offer was accepted and Mr. Mann was ordained and duly installed as colleague minister of the town with Rev. Asaph Rice, according to the usages of the Congregationalist order, Feb. 22, 1815.

Mr. Rice, who had already become very infirm, so much so as to incapacitate him for further pulpit labors, gradually declined in health and strength throughout the year following the settlement of Mr. Mann, and until the 31st of March, 1816, when he quietly breathed his last in the eighty-third year of his age and the fifty-first of his ministry in Westminster. A sense of personal and public bereavement and a feeling of mournful regret pervaded the entire community, every one seeming to realize that a good and useful citizen, as well as a devout and faithful minister of the Gospel, had passed away. His funeral was largely attended by the people of Westminster and adjacent towns, the sermon on the occasion being preached by his friend and neighbor of nearly half a century's standing, Rev. John Cushing of Ashburnham.

At the time of the death of Mr. Rice, the warrant for the regular April town meeting had been issued, in which was the customary article: "To grant the Rev. Asaph Rice's fifty-second years' Sallary, and let out his wood," etc. When this article was taken up in proper order for consideration it was dismissed, the town evidently not feeling prepared to act upon the matter involved at so early a date. Subsequently, on the 13th of May, time for deliberation having transpired, it was

"Voted to pay the Estate of the Rev. Asaph Rice his Sallary to the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1816.

"Voted that the Town relinquish all claims that they have against the Estate of Rev. Asaph Rice.

"Voted to pay the expense of the Interment of the Rev. Asaph Rice," amounting in the aggregate to \$60.61.

Two years later, at a meeting held April 6, 1818, the town

"Voted to have the Selectmen provide and erect Grave-Stones at the grave of the late Asaph Rice deceased."

This vote was carried into effect, the stones remaining to this day to mark the resting-place of all that was mortal of the second minister of the town.

A brief sketch of the life, character, and personal qualities of the man, who, for more than fifty years, was one of the prominent citizens of Westminster, and the special guardian and promoter of its moral and spiritual interests, will bring the present chapter to a fitting close.





Asaph Rice was the son of Beriah and Mary (Goodenow) Rice of Westborough, born May 9, 1733. He descended from one Edmund Rice, a native of England, who came early to this country, being a resident of Sudbury in 1639, whence he removed to Marlboro' where he died in 1663. Between Edmund and Beriah were Thomas, Sen., and Thomas, Jr., making the subject of this notice of the fifth generation in New England.

Of the childhood and youth of Asaph Rice nothing can be given. He graduated at Harvard College in the class of 1752, when but nineteen years of age. He then studied medicine, entering upon the duties of that profession at Brookfield, with the expectation of continuing therein through life. But becoming interested in religion, he resolved to abandon the calling he had chosen for the work of the Christian ministry, being encouraged in his change of plans for himself by the Rev. Eli Forbes, then the minister of the town, and his earnest and lifelong friend. After completing the requisite course of theological study, he labored two years as a missionary among the Oneida Indians on the Susquehanna River, and subsequently in Rhode Island, with the remnants probably of the once powerful tribe of the Narragansetts. Returning from that service, he in due time offered himself as a candidate for the vacant pastorate in Westminster, with the result stated in preceding pages.

Soon after his settlement he married, Dec. 26, 1765, Mary, daughter of Rev. Ebenezer and Mary (Bush) Morse of Boylston, who died in giving birth to a daughter, March 29, 1767. He afterward married Elizabeth Clough of Boston, by whom he had four sons and three daughters. One of the sons died in infancy, and a second, when twenty-five years of age, in 1807. Elizabeth (Clough) Rice died Feb. 16, 1782, aged 43. In August, 1796, he married for a third wife Lucy (Barron), widow of Dr. Benjamin Shattuck of Templeton, who survived him several years, dying at Templeton, April 16, 1821, aged 68. Two of the sons of Mr. Rice and four of his daughters grew up to maturity, married, and settled in life. Through them a goodly number of his descendants are still to be found among the children of men.

While Mr. Rice was yet a young man, soon after coming to Westminster, he had the misfortune to fall from his horse when crossing Cambridge bridge, and break his right wrist, disabling him for a time, and seriously interfering with his work. Singularly enough, some years later, in riding over the same bridge, he fell again, breaking the wrist a second time with more serious results. So great was the injury then experienced that it was deemed necessary to amputate the hand, obliging him to learn to write with his left one, in the use of which he acquired considerable chirographical skill, as his sermons and other manuscripts left at his decease sufficiently attest.

A few days subsequent to his ordination Mr. Rice purchased



lot No. 9, lying directly west of that of Rev. Mr. Marsh, upon the northeast corner of which he erected, during the following year, as already stated, a large and commodious dwelling in which he ever afterward resided. His large farm, which he is said to have cultivated somewhat extensively, and with a good degree of care and skill, gave him ample opportunity for exercise, and aided much, no doubt, during the earlier part of his ministry, to eke out his slender and oftentimes inadequate salary. He evidently took an interest in arboriculture, beautifying his home and the whole neighborhood with a goodly number of elm trees transplanted by his own hand, whose grateful shade has been enjoyed by four successive generations, and whose tall and commanding forms still lend a charm to the landscape amid which they stand, imparting satisfaction and delight to the eye and mind of all beholders.

In his personal appearance Mr. Rice is said to have been "a little above medium stature, well proportioned, rather spare, broad-shouldered, with long face, large nose, and dark complexion." He is remembered by a few aged people as of erect form and posture, possessing much dignity, and having generally a thoughtful and serious cast of countenance. Yet was he affectionate in his disposition, cordial, social, and agreeable in his intercourse with his parishioners and fellow townsfolk. He was ready and free in conversation with those of adult age, while the children he would draw to him by his pleasant words, "take them upon his knee, teaching them the commandments and the catechism."

Theologically considered, Mr. Rice may be regarded as a moderate Calvinist, inclining rather to Armenian views than to the more rigid forms of the generally received faith of the churches of his day. Liberal minded and catholic in spirit, he was disposed to allow a large measure of freedom of thought and speech within the old lines of New England Puritanism, even while holding very decided opinions of his own, and while preaching those opinions plainly, fearlessly, and without equivocation. He was, however, in no sense a controversialist, delighting in theological disputation and religious knight-errantry, but desired and sought to build up Christian character among his people, and lift the community to higher moral and spiritual levels, rather than multiply adherents of a given creed or defend any dogmatic or ecclesiastical system, however venerable or popular it might be. Gifted with no unusual power of speech and a placid temperament, his manner was quiet and unimpassioned yet earnest and determined, evincing sincerity, high resolve, and consecration to the Master's service. In no wise presuming or self-complacent—in no wise aggressive or sensational, he did not incline to those more impassioned and exciting methods and measures which, at a later date, were employed with a varied success to call public attention to reli-





gious concerns, to multiply nominal converts to Christ, and lengthen church lists. More congenial to his taste and more acceptable to his judgment were the gentle persuasives of the Gospel than the flaming terrors of the law in the administration of the affairs of the ministerial office, and in the promotion of the Kingdom of God in the world. Averting, as far as possible, personal antagonisms, and shunning the heat of sectarian warfare, he sought for the things that made for peace both among his own people, in the community, and between the churches. His ministry, in this regard, was in striking contrast with that of his predecessor, and so it would seem much more in accord with the spirit and purpose of the great head of the church, whose mission it was, in no small degree, to soften the harsh asperities of life, remove its animosities and embitterments, and establish in all human relationships the reign of kindness, brotherhood, and charity. A "good minister of Jesus Christ," he discharged with conscientious fidelity and zeal the duties of the office he was called to fill.

"And as a bird each fond endearment tries  
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,  
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,  
Allured to brighter worlds and led the way."



## CHAPTER XV.

### GENERAL MILITARY ANNALS.

THE MARTIAL SPIRIT—EARLY COMPANIES—WAR OF 1812-15—  
WESTMINSTER RIFLE COMPANY AND LATER ORGANIZATIONS.

THE martial spirit prevailed very largely among the early inhabitants of the town and indeed through the first third of the present century. Considerations both of self-protection and of patriotism, according to the prevailing theories of social and civil life, combined to arouse and foster this spirit among the first settlers and to perpetuate it from generation to generation among their descendants. Its manifestation in the French and Indian Wars and in the Revolutionary conflict has been duly portrayed in preceding chapters, while its display in relation to the more recent conflict with the rebel slaveholding forces of the country will be specifically depicted in one devoted exclusively to the subject later on. It is the purpose of the present narration to outline the more general forms and features which it has assumed in the ordinary activities of the community.

Previous to the incorporation of the township in 1759, most of the residents who performed military duty or rendered service of any kind as soldiers, did so either as members of regular companies in neighboring localities, as recruits in an existing war, or as special scouts or guards to meet some danger, real or apprehended, to which the infant settlement was exposed. A home company, however, had been formed before that event took place, of which Daniel Hoar was captain, and in which Nathan Whitney served as corporal. Further than this nothing has been learned of it. In 1761 a second Worcester County regiment was organized, one having previously existed, with Col. Joseph Wilder in command. In that regiment was a company from Westminster, the former one reofficered perhaps, of which Nicholas Dike was *captain*; Benjamin Butterfield, *lieutenant*; and John Woodward, *ensign*. The last two were soon superseded respectively by John Rand and John Brooks.

Ten years afterward, in 1771, instead of the one company just referred to, there were two in town, Caleb Wilder being colonel of the regiment. One of them, it would seem, recruited from the northerly part, and the other from the southerly; and these were distinguished from each other by terms indica-



tive of the locality to which they respectively belonged. The officers of the North company were: John Rand, *captain*; John Estabrook, *lieutenant*; William Edgell, *ensign*. Those of the South were: Nathan Whitney, *captain*; John Miles, *lieutenant*; Noah Miles, *ensign*. The commission of Captain Whitney has been preserved, and is now in possession of his grandson, Calvin Whitney. As a matter of historical interest in several respects it is herewith inserted.

{ Place of the } "Thomas Hutchinson, Captain General and Governor in  
Governor's } Chief in and over His Majesty's Province of Massa-  
seal. } chusetts Bay.

"To Nathan Whitney, Gentleman, Greeting:—

"By virtue of the Power and Authority in and by His Majesty's Royal Commission to me granted to be Captain General, &c. over His Majesty's Province of Massachusetts Bay aforesaid, I Do, by these Presents, (reposing especial Trust and Confidence in your Loyalty Courage and good Conduct,) constitute and appoint you, the said Nathan Whitney, to be Captain of the Second Military Company of foot in Westminster in the Regiment of Militia in the County of Worcester whereof Caleb Wilder Esq. is Colonel.

"You are therefore Carefully and diligently to discharge the Duty of a Captain in leading, ordering, and exercising the said Company in Arms, both inferior officers and soldiers, and to keep them in good Order and Discipline, and they are hereby commanded to obey you as their Captain, and you are yourself to observe and follow such Orders and Instructions as you shall from time to time receive from your Colonel or other Superior Officer, according to Military Rules and Discipline pursuant to the Trust reposed in you.

"Given under my Hand and Seal at Arms in Boston, the 12<sup>th</sup> day of July in the Eleventh Year of the Reign of His Majesty King GEORGE the Third, Annoque Domini, 1771.

"By his Excellency's Command. JNO. COTTON D. Sec'y"

There is also preserved as above and herewith presented in full,

"A LIST OF SOULDIER'S UNDER THE COMAND OF NATHAN WHITNEY, CAPT.

Sert. Josiah Jackson.	Benja. Bigelow.
Sert. Jonas Whitney.	Jonathan Baley.
Sert. Samll. Sawing.	Ebeneazer Bolton.
Sert. Elisha Jackson.	Andrew Beard.
Corp. John Hoar.	Barron Brown.
Corp. Samll. Cook.	
Corp. Joshua Everett.	James Clark, Jr.
Corp. Ephraim Miller.	
Drum. Josiah Wheeler.	Timothy Damon.
	Nathan Darby.
	Andrew Darby, Jr.
Jonas Adams.	Nathall. Eaton.
Seath Adams.	Ebeneazer Eaton.
Joel Adams.	Jacob Emerson.
John Adams.	
Stephen Adams.	Samll. Foster.
William Bickford.	
Jonas Baker.	Peater Graves.
Nehemiah Bowers.	Richard Graves, Jr.
Edmond Barnard.	Jonathan Graves.





Levy Graves.	Jonathan Sawing.
William Houghton.	David Sawing.
William Horsley.	Reuben Sawing.
Jonathan Hager.	Abraham Stone.
Barzilai Holt.	Darias Sawyer.
Darias Harvey.	Elijah Simonds.
	Jonas Spaulding.
Joseph Miller, Jr.	Asa Taft.
Samuel Miller.	Moses Thursten.
Isaac Miller.	Jedediah Tucker.
Noah Miles.	Nathanll Totingham.
Stephen Miles.	
Nathan Miles.	John Woodward, Jr.
Silas Marshall.	Nathaniel Wilder.
Thomas Merriam.	Nathaniel Woodward.
	Nathan Wood, Jr.
David Nicols.	Ahijah Wood.
Shadrick Newton.	Abel Wood.
	Isaac Williams.
Hananiah Rand.	Jacob Walton.

"Westminster, Sept. the 8<sup>th</sup> 1772."

Another document worthy a place in this chapter is the following, which explains itself.

"WESTMINSTER Oct the 28 1771.

"Capt John Rand and Capt Nathan Whitney with their other officers mett at the house of Mr. Abner Holden Innholder in Westminster and agreed on a Devotion of their Milletary Companies as follows, viz:—

"The South Company under the Command of Cap. Nathan Whitney to contain all the training Soldiers living South of the County road by Mr. James Walker's Leading to Winchendon by Mr. Amos Gateses, and all living on the northerly side of the afore said roade within twenty rods of it from the Town lyne by James Walkers to Ensign Edggles and from Jabez Bigelows to the town lyne by the said Gateses.

"And all the Training Soldiers living in Westminster on the North Side of the aforesaid bounds to belong to the North Company under the Command of Capt. John Rand.

"A true Copy from my records

ELISHA BIGELOW, Clerck."

This document possesses double value from the fact that upon the action which it makes a note of, was based the division of the tax list of the town a year and a half afterward, when it was voted, March 1, 1773, that "the List of the Rates Shall be Divided as the Millitary officers have Divided their Companies," which vote remained substantially in force for more than fifty years, or until 1827, at which time and afterwards all the taxes were included in a single list.

Very little appears in the town records in relation to the volunteer militia of those early days or of general military affairs, any further than they were connected with preparations for and the prosecution of the war of the Revolution, as before noted. The public policy in regard to such matters seems to have been that of allowing the different companies of soldiery, organized



agreeably to the laws of the Province, to manage their own affairs in their own way, without dictation or interference on the part of the citizens at large, as indicated in a vote passed in legal meeting Dec. 13, 1774, a copy of which appears on page 154.

The growing alienation between the royal authorities at Boston and elsewhere and the patriotic and liberty-loving people, threatening open conflict at no very distant day, created intense interest in all directions, and inspired watchful vigilance and such precautionary measures as the exigencies of the case seemed to demand. Conventions of representative men were held at different points for mutual deliberation and to devise plans of united action. Several of these, composed of committees of correspondence and delegates from the different towns of Worcester County met at Worcester during the summer and early autumn of 1774. That of Sept. 20th was principally engaged in reorganizing the militia of the county on an independent basis, as a needful preparation for impending emergencies, and as an offset to the continued concentration of troops under Governor Gage. Seven regiments were provided for in place of the two previously existing ones, two of which, with the brothers John and Asa Whitcomb of Lancaster as colonels, included the towns in this general vicinity, Westminster among the rest. All commissions then in force were to be given up and new officers were at once to be elected. This accounts for the fact that among the four captains who with their men responded to the "Lexington Alarm" the following April, three of those already named, Hoar, Rand, and Whitney, had no place.

About this time, very likely in answer to the call of the Provincial and Continental Congresses for troops to be enlisted and put in readiness for active service, there appear to have been at least three, or perhaps four, companies in town, comprising nearly all the able-bodied men, whose Captains were Elisha Jackson, Noah Miles, John Estabrook, and Nicholas Dike. Of these, John Estabrook and Noah Miles had commands representing the former North and South companies, while that of Elisha Jackson was composed of men belonging chiefly to the westerly part of the town.

From all that can be learned at the present day, it seems that the members of these several companies regarded themselves, and were regarded, as simply "Minute Men," raised, armed, and equipped for special service in a time of sudden need. Many of them, however, as the war came hurrying on, enlisted in due form as active soldiers, becoming part and parcel of the army of the Revolution, while those who did not still kept themselves, by equipment and drill, in fighting trim, and held themselves bound in loyalty and honor to support the cause of the colonies and to answer any pressing demand that might be made upon them, as they did at several different times during the





progress of the conflict. All this appears in the chapter to which allusion has been made, and needs no further delineation here.

After the Revolution, the military interests of the town reverted essentially to their former condition. So far as organization was concerned, there were two infantry companies, known as the North and South companies, divided as before stated, and these continued to exist by regular succession, as a part of the militia system of the Commonwealth, far down into the present century. They afforded a certain kind and amount of amusement to the men belonging to them and to the general public, and presented an opportunity for a goodly number of persons ambitious of such honor, to gain some distinction in the line of military promotion and to wear before the world a corresponding title.

Towards the close of the last century, at a date not ascertained, Westminster united with Ashburnham, Fitchburg, Leominster, and Lunenburg in forming a company of cavalry, which continued to exist and lend dignity and grandeur to military parades till the year 1829, when it was disbanded. John Harrington and Thomas Damon are thought to be the only living representatives of this body in town. The local captains, so far as learned, were William Edgell, Josiah Wheeler, Asa Bigelow, Benjamin Dike, Benjamin Harrington, and John Edgell, now of Gardner. The other towns interested furnished, of course, their proportionate quota of commanding officers.

Occasionally circumstances arose in which it seemed necessary for the town to act with reference to military affairs. April 5, 1802, it voted "to equip the training Soldiers in this town," etc. And on the 9th of May, 1803, upon an article "to see if the Town will provide fire armes and equipments for those soldiers that are unable to equip themselves agreeable to law," it was voted "that the selectmen purchase twelve stands of arms."

Again, Oct. 6, 1806, it was voted "to procure powder and Balls sufficient for the soldiers in this town for May training," and \$50 were appropriated for the purpose.

It appears that at the time of the whiskey insurrection in Pennsylvania in 1794, when the President issued a call for 15,000 men to suppress the revolt, several persons were drafted from Westminster, the names of whom have not been preserved, and the town voted "to make up the wages of such Soldiers as are Lately Drafted to go into the army to forty shillings for each month that they are in the army with what encouragement that Government now gives or shall Hereafter give."

**The War of 1812-15.** A continued series of aggressions on the part of the government of Great Britain; or its representatives, towards the United States and its loyal subjects, re-



lating chiefly to the impressment of American seamen into the service of the crown, and to the practice of searching American vessels for deserters or others seeking to escape from the officers of the kingdom, resulted, after the failure of repeated attempts to obtain redress, in the declaration of war against the mother country by act of Congress, June 18, 1812. This war, partly no doubt for purely partisan reasons, and partly from higher and more truly patriotic considerations, was extremely unpopular throughout New England and especially in Massachusetts, and called forth from the State Legislature, as well as from spontaneous gatherings of the people, earnest protest and unsparing condemnation. That the citizens of Westminster shared very fully in the prevailing feeling of this whole section of the country is clearly shown by their corporate action at a meeting called Aug. 3d, "to take into consideration the alarming Situation of our publick affairs and choose an agent or agents to attend a County Convention to be holden at Worcester" in reference to them.

Pursuant to that call, Solomon Strong, Esq., was chosen a delegate to the proposed convention and a series of Resolutions was passed, expressing the sentiment of the inhabitants upon the great issue of the hour, two of which only are given as sufficiently indicative of the spirit and purport of the whole.

*"Resolved*, that we highly deprecate the present ruinous and destructive war with Great Britain occasioned as we verily believe by an undue attachment in our national government to France and an unreasonable prejudice against Great Britain, which war in our opinion [is] unjust, unnecessary, and inexpedient; a war in which we have everything to lose and nothing to gain; a war without hope of success, and, if successful, would cause the loss of our liberties and the ruin of our beloved Country.

*"Resolved*, that we will use every peaceable and Constitutional means in our power to affect [effect] a change in the Administration of the national Government and to elevate to office men who have wisdom to discern, [and] firmness and patriotism to pursue such measures as will tend to restore to our country that prosperity and happiness which it once enjoyed."

These Resolutions, drawn and reported by a committee consisting of Solomon Strong, Esq., Abel Wood, Esq., Jonas Whitney, Esq., and Dr. Isaac Warren, were passed unanimously and ordered to be printed over the signatures of the Moderator and Town Clerk in the *Spy* and *Aegis* published at Worcester.

How near the truth the citizens of Westminster came in characterizing this conflict as "unjust, unnecessary, and inexpedient," "a war without hope of success," may be inferred from the fact that in the Treaty of Ghent, terminating hostilities and restoring peace between the belligerent nations, signed Dec. 24, 1814, though the final battle was not fought till the following month, nothing whatever was said concerning the particular grievances on account of which the bloody strife was inaugurated.



All records of enlistments in the army from this State during the struggle under notice are in the keeping of the Department of War at Washington, and repeated efforts to get a copy of such portions of them as relate to this town have proved unavailing. It is not known that a single soldier here volunteered his services, though a few were secured by conscription. When the town was called upon to grant aid and encouragement to such in the form of bounty or additional pay, true to its original purpose, it refused to do so by dissolving the meeting held expressly to effect that object. Nevertheless, payment was made, as by law required no doubt, for transporting soldiers with camp equipage to Northboro', as well as for making two thousand rounds of cartridges for the use of the government troops. The only persons known at the present date (1892) to have been in the army were Elijah Maynard and Merari Spaulding, the former only a temporary resident of the place, though there were probably several others whose names have not been ascertained.

About the year 1816 the early military division of the town into two sections, each having its respective company, was virtually abandoned, and a more general system was adopted. In place of the old organizations, a Rifle Company was formed, which, though originally composed of men from the northern section of the territory, at length drew its members from all directions, representing in its own field the entire community. It was in existence some twenty or more years, attaining a high standing and an enviable reputation in military circles abroad, while at home it was regarded with much pride by those interested in the profession of arms. So important a place did it fill in the military annals of the period to which it belonged, that it is deemed due to it and to the memory of those interested in it, to present a full list of its commanding officers, and also, as is understood, of its charter members.

Its several captains were:

Oliver Adams,	Joseph H. Whitney,	Major Page,
Nathan Merriam,	Joseph Howard,	Sylvester Miller,
Silas Smith,	Aaron Wood,	Asa Brooks.
Jesse Spaulding,	Reuben Fenno,	

The following is a list of its charter members:

Jonas Cutler,	Jonas Winship,	Jonas Miller,
Charles Capen,	John Winship,	Ezra Wood,
Abel Sawyer,	Hayman Wheeler,	Sewall Barnes,
Amos Sawyer,	Jefferson Wheeler,	Samuel Barnes,
Amos Wyman,	Asa Wheeler,	Sullivan Barnes,
Farwell Cowee,	Nehemiah Shumway,	John Woodward,
Aaron Taylor,	Jesse Spaulding,	John Taylor,
Benjamin Seaver,	James Puffer,	Jonas Ward,
Moses Mosman,	Stephen Puffer,	John Hadley.
Sidney Smith,	Levi Miller,	

The charter was surrendered about 1837.





After the formation of the Rifle Company, the remaining men enrolled in the militia according to law, effected a somewhat loose and irresponsible organization under which they appeared from year to year at May Training and General Muster, so as to meet the requirements of the Statutes and escape the otherwise imposed fine for "non-performance of duty." Their lack of careful drill, their cheap, improvised uniforms, and awkward, grotesque appearance generally, won for them the fantastic sobriquet of "Slam-bangs" or "Silver-heels." They helped to give variety to the conglomerate assemblage accustomed to gather from far and near on public military occasions, and made fun for a certain kind of "small boy," and for those of larger growth who had an eye for the fantastic and ludicrous.

With the repeal of the Statute requiring the formal organization, equipment, and drill of persons duly enrolled and deemed liable to do military duty, according to the custom of former days, and the gradual diffusion and growth of humanitarian and philanthropic principles in the community at large, which characterized the closing years of the first half of the present century, the martial spirit declined very considerably in town, and all associated manifestations of that spirit not only lost their charm to many people, but were regarded with distrust and abhorrence. The bewitching fascination of a well-uniformed soldiery and all the accouterments pertaining to camp life and the horrid trade of human slaughter, had few attractions to those who felt themselves to have been baptized into the spirit of the "Prince of Peace," and who saw, or thought they saw, in the precepts of the Gospel of Christ, prohibitory mandates against all war and all preparations for the wholesale shedding of human blood.

Nevertheless, there continued to be in certain directions a lingering interest in military affairs, and a prevailing desire to revive and re-establish the ancient practice of "playing war" as it had existed under varying forms among different nations of men since the world began. This interest and desire culminated, at length, in the formation, about the year 1843, of a new company, which assumed the name of the "Westminster Guards." It was organized with Joseph H. Whitney, who was chiefly instrumental in getting it up, as *captain*; Rufus P. Chase, *first lieutenant*; and Philander C. Brown and William Edgell, *second lieutenants*. Its successive commanders following Captain Whitney, were James R. Bruce, Josiah Puffer, James M. Whitman, Amos B. Holden, and Henry Lucas, under whose administration it disbanded in the year 1857. This corps received little favor or encouragement from the general public at home, though it gained something of a reputation in military circles abroad. It was reported present at a "Cornwallis" held in Leominster, Oct. 19, 1853, where it acquitted



itself with the honor appropriate to the occasion, as was also another "ununiformed" company from town, improvised for special service on that day.

No further movements of this sort were made in Westminster until the slaveholders' Rebellion broke out, revealing the ultimate infamous purpose that lay behind it, when a sense of impending peril and the proclamation of President Lincoln summoned to arms the loyal people of the country in defence of constitutional liberty, and for the salvation of the republic. Of the part taken by Westminster in the fearful struggle thus inaugurated, with all needful comprehensiveness and detail, the reader will learn in due season.

Very naturally the experiences connected with the suppression of the Rebellion were calculated to revive, extend, and intensify the military spirit among all classes of people throughout all the loyal states. And thoroughly aroused as it was, and dominant while the conflict lasted, it could not, even if desired, be remanded to silence when that gigantic conspiracy was overthrown, and the arts of war once more gave way to those of peace. Memories of battle scenes and valorous deeds, combined with other influences, served to keep it alive and to prepare the way for an early expression of it in an organized form in this as in other localities. During the year 1866 a company of infantry consisting of sixty-four members was enrolled, mostly through the efforts of veterans of the war. This company was organized by the appointment of E. Abner Drury, who had been commissioned lieutenant in the Federal service, *captain*; Ethan W. Holden, *first lieutenant*; and J. Hervey Miller, *second lieutenant*,—and was assigned a place in the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, and designated as Co. H, 10th Regt., 3d Brigade, 1st Division. It also bore the local name of "Wachusett Rifle Co." Captain Drury was succeeded in office by Ethan W. Holden, Edward P. Miller, and Edward S. Kendall. The company was disbanded at the time of the reduction of the State Militia in 1876. It was composed largely of veterans, and was deemed one of the best in the Commonwealth by the adjutant general.

Incidental to the existence in any community of military companies, such as have been under notice, forming a part of a general system of organized soldiery, were formerly, as now, the annual reviews or gatherings for field-day exercises, in military drill and display, under the inspection and criticism of duly appointed officers. These occasions, known in old-time parlance as "Musters," were memorable not only as military exhibits, but on account of the crowds of people who attended them, coming, as they did, from every rank and condition in life, and the multiform attractions which characterized them. Added to the pomp and pageantry of the soldiery, with glittering arms, streaming banners, and bands of martial music,





there were side shows of many a kind and name, museums of monstrosities and nondescripts, hucksters of all sorts of merchandise, caterers in eatables and drinkables of the most miscellaneous nature and quality, and means of amusement as diversified as the tastes and pockets of those to whom they appealed for patronage. And, withal, such a medley of voices and noises as baffles description, if not the imagination, adequately to represent. To one who remembers these occasions, they can be easily reproduced, but to one who has never been present at them, no words can convey any proper idea of what they were in the day of their glory.

As one of the eight or ten towns in the vicinity having military companies belonging to the same regiment or brigade, Westminster must, of course, in her time and turn act the part of host on occasions of annual inspection and review, and extend welcome and hospitality, not only to the soldiers but to all who might attend. Several localities, aside from the old common, in the vicinity of the central village, may be pointed out where such gatherings were held, perhaps more than once, in former days, around which some marked associations cluster, and memories of times that were but are not,—localities that still retain some flavor of the powder that was burned upon them, some echoes of music that once vibrated in their airs, and that still bear, perhaps, the well-known name of the “Old Muster-field.”

Some of these gatherings were attended by incidents or circumstances of a special, and even a tragic, interest. One, occurring Oct. 13, 1819, was called the “Snowstorm Muster”—a sharp snowstorm prevailing the greater part of the day when it took place. At one held June 12, 1804, in the large field crowning the swell of land at the foot of Meetinghouse Pond, Mr. David Burbank of Fitchburg was accidentally killed in a sham fight, the bayonet of a comrade being thrust through the eye into the brain. “A religious service was held June 22d in view of the sad event. A long procession of militia and citizens marched from Capt. Hoar’s hotel to the Church. Rev. Mr. Rice prayed, and Rev. Mr. Osgood of Gardner preached. The exercises were solemn and impressive.”—*Massachusetts Spy*, June 27, 1804.

Under the State militia system a few citizens of Westminster rose to regimental honors, among whom were

Thaddeus Bond, commissioned Colonel, 1795.

Abel Wood, commissioned Lieutenant-colonel 4th Regt., 2d Brigade, 1802.

Edward Bacon, commissioned Major 4th Regt., 2d Brigade, 1808.

Arna Bacon, commissioned Major 5th Regt., 2d Brigade, 1808.

Nathan Raymond, commissioned Major 4th Regt., 2d Brigade, 1811.

Horatio G. Buttrick, commissioned Major of artillery Regt., 1814.

Asa Bigelow, commissioned Lieutenant-colonel of cavalry Regt., 1819.

Asa Bigelow, commissioned Colonel of cavalry Regt., 1820.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### INDUSTRIAL PURSUITS AND ENTERPRISES.

THE LAW OF LABOR—AGRICULTURE THE MOST VITAL CALLING—  
MECHANICAL AND COMMERCIAL INTERESTS.

LABOR is an essential condition of existence upon the earth. It is, moreover, a condition of health, prosperity, honor, virtue, happiness. Man was made to work, as a means not only of prolonging his physical life, but of developing his inner and higher nature,—his intellectual, moral, and spiritual energies,—and of making him, in *fact*, as in the infinite plan, the noblest product of the divine handiwork. Only by the wise and orderly use of his faculties and powers—only by work, well-chosen, properly directed, faithfully performed, can he rise to the full stature of his best possibility, or answer the end for which God gave him being. The familiar maxims commending habits of industry and condemning idleness and sloth are rooted in a true philosophy of existence, and justified by sound reason and the facts of human experience in all periods of the world's history. Indolence, want of occupation, lack of an aim in life, having nothing to do, begets not only thriftlessness and penury, but physical, mental, and moral imbecility, eating the heart out of men and of nations; while labor, self-effort, the orderly activity of one's native powers, imparts vigor to the bodily frame, develops the hidden energies of the mind, gives strength and nobleness to personal character, builds up communities, states, and nations into a high form of civilization, and carries the race onward and upward towards its divinely appointed destiny.

The people of Westminster from the beginning have been industrious, hard-working, and self-dependent. They have eaten their bread in the sweat of their brow, and honest labor, the habit of diligence, a definite trade or calling, have always been regarded by them as virtues and tokens of respectability and honor, rather than otherwise. The field and the meadow, the shop and the mill, the kitchen and the laundry, have witnessed to the activity, skill, and thrift which have characterized those who have dwelt within its borders. A great number and variety of trades and vocations have come into vogue and prevailed for a longer or shorter time during its history, as required by existing needs and demands at home or abroad, or as suited to the capacity, the inclination, and taste of different individuals or classes of the population.



**Farming.** By the very necessities of the case, the first settlers were tillers of the soil. Their lives depended upon what, by their own personal toil and care, they could evoke from the not over fertile bosom of mother earth. It was the concern and practice of every one coming here, with scarce an exception, to take up a given section or lot of land secured to him and his heirs after him, in fee simple, and, having made a little clearing and erected a rude shelter for himself and his dependent ones, to break the sod at the earliest possible date, prepare the mold, and plant the seed of coming harvests. Scattered throughout the extensive territory of the town were these early residents, established on their respective farmsteads of sixty acres each, founding homes for themselves and their children after them, converting the wide forest wastes into fruitful fields, orchards, and gardens, and causing the solitary places "to bud and blossom as the rose." In these rustic labors, each husbandman found in his wife a partner of his fortunes in the most literal sense—a helpmeet often in the processes of growing and harvesting the products of the earth, and always a helpmeet in preparing those products for the supply of household needs, and in making the home, humble and rude though it might be, a resting place for the weary, and an abode of contentment, harmony, peace, and joy. Thus it was that each family became at once largely self-supporting and independent—a little community by itself, as well as a constituent element of the growing settlement and community at large. Thus it was that the town entered upon its career—beginning at the bottom, as it were, and building itself up from the ground literally, and upon the primary and most fundamental industry of human society, by slow but sure means and methods, into a fuller, freer, more varied and complex, and consequently more all-sided and perfect life.

In addition to their knowledge of agriculture, which was oftentimes crude and limited, these pioneers had, generally speaking, some practical acquaintance with mechanical principles and the use of such tools as were employed in the more essential styles of handicraft, enabling them to erect their own rude dwellings, the log cabin or frame house, as well as all other structures which necessity or convenience might require, and to manufacture their various implements of husbandry, together with most articles of household furniture. Moreover, there was usually to be found among the female members of a family enough native aptitude or acquired talent for the proper fashioning and fitting of the several portions of personal apparel to leave unsupplied no real want in that regard. Indeed, there were few, if any, of the absolute needs of life but that the ingenuity and tact of these ancestors of ours could readily make provision for, and no doubt there were more of the conveniences and comforts of existence at their command than might without reflection be supposed.





For nearly a century farming may be regarded as having been the leading occupation of the inhabitants of Westminster, and even to the present day it may be considered as holding that place in a general way, though during the last fifty years its relative importance as a definite calling and means of a livelihood has greatly declined. But for more than half the period of the town's history it was essentially the one industrial interest of the community,—the most central and commanding of all the vocations which engaged the attention and employed the energies of the people. Other callings, trades, and professions were, as a rule, dependent upon or tributary to this, the chief concern of all classes and conditions of society. Fathers trained their sons to the arts and habits of the husbandman, and the sons, true to their parental discipline, usually succeeded to their father's calling and estate, each man's landed property being distributed, with rare exceptions, among his children. Mothers trained their daughters to the arts and habits of good house-keeping, and housekeepers, in the capacity of farmers' wives, they generally became. Generation succeeded generation in these honest and honorable ways, not only gaining an adequate livelihood, but securing a competency sufficient to provide, with rare exceptions, for the contingencies of misfortune and the disabilities of advancing years. The soil, yielding none too readily or liberally to the solicitations of the agriculturist, has yet, for the most part, rendered fair returns for wise investments made; and in not a few instances has been a source whence, by small but steady gains carefully husbanded, have been derived moderate fortunes, affording the possessor a large measure of freedom from anxious care, of personal and domestic comfort, ease, and independence.

And while, as just now suggested, this important interest has relatively declined during the last half century, it yet, under the shadow of more attractive and imposing manufacturing and commercial activities in this and neighboring towns, and despite the competitions created by the superior productiveness of the vast prairie lands of the mighty West intensified by the ease and rapidity of transportation which renders their products so accessible to eastern markets, maintains a respectable place in the catalogue of useful industries, and is worthy of meritorious mention in this review. This is clearly evidenced by the highly creditable displays of farm products made at the annual fairs which have been held for many years past in the autumn-time, and by the fact that some of the most prosperous, substantial, and honored citizens of the town are still followers of the plow and keepers of flocks and herds. The demand which the constantly increasing number of persons engaged in various kinds of manufacturing carried on in this and especially in neighboring towns makes upon the agriculturist for all sorts of fresh vegetables and fruits, is an ever-present stimulus to which he



is in nowise indifferent, as attested by the improvements witnessed in his department of the great industrial hive. To show what has been accomplished in this behalf from the beginning to the present time, a few quotations have been taken from reports made at different dates to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, as by the public statutes authorized and required, and assigned to their appropriate place in the chapter of this work devoted to statistical information and kindred topics, to which the reader is hereby referred.

The early settlers of the town, in addition to their skill and efficiency in clearing away the forests and cultivating the soil, had, as already stated, sufficient mechanical ingenuity to enable them, with the common wood-working implements of which they usually had a supply, to serve existing needs in that respect. But persons trained in the various arts necessary to the construction of more elaborate and better finished products of human skill soon appeared, supplementing the common calling of husbandman with that of carpentering, masonry, and other kinds of handicraft, wherewith to meet the calls that might arise for such service in the growing settlement. In their turn and time, too, came blacksmiths, painters, glaziers, shoemakers, and all the artisans, of whatever sort or name, incident to civilized society. Of these the town has never been in want.

**Cloth Making.** One of the earliest industries claiming the attention of the founders of the town was the manufacture of textile fabrics for purposes of personal apparel and the general uses of the family. To this end, most of the farmers were engaged in keeping sheep and also in raising hemp and flax, whence requisite material could be derived for supplying the demand in this regard in the home and neighborhood. Instruments and contrivances for the proper manipulation of this material constituted no unimportant part of the outfit of a household in those days. The swingle and hatchel for working hemp and flax, card-boards with their sets of serried teeth for making rolls of wool, spinning-wheels and looms, were as essential articles of indoor use, as were the axe, the plow, the hoe, and scythe for the proper equipment and tillage of the farm. Most of the goods from which the clothing of both men and women as well as children was cut, was not only home-spun, but home-woven, as the garments themselves were home-made—professional tailors, dressmakers, and milliners, coming in to ply their respective trades at a more modern date. Variety of color or shade to relieve the hueless monotony of the original material and please the eye and taste, could be secured by the use of dyes derived from different plants and woods readily found in forest or in field. The wives and daughters in those days were as familiar with all the arts and implements which these things involved, as were the husbands and sons with those employed in





the multiform activities of outdoor life. Little time for idle hands or minds on the part of either male or female was there when the grandparents and great-grandparents of the present generation were doing their best to keep the wolf from their door, to furnish shelter, food, and raiment for themselves and those they held most dear, and to provide for any and every contingency of coming need—laying in that way the foundations of a prosperity for their town in which those succeeding them to the latest period of time might abundantly rejoice.

The invention of the power loom and its introduction into this country early the present century, resulting in the establishment of what has come to be an immense system for the production of all kinds of woollen, cotton, and other goods, put an end, after a time, to the slow and laborious processes of domestic manufacture, and ultimately consigned all the paraphernalia thereof either to destruction or to the garrets of the older families and the museums of the antiquarian. It is now some fifty years or more since that special form of industry disappeared essentially from the community, leaving here and there a few memorials or tokens of itself in the shape of hatchels, spinning wheels, reels, and the like, to arrest the attention of the curious and remind the present generation of what was "in the good old days of yore."

It is proper to observe in this connection that about the year 1812, Nathan Corey, having purchased "the Forge" property, so called, in the lower part of what is now Wachusettville, erected a factory and filled it with machinery for the production of cotton cloth. He carried on the business, however, but a few years, when the plant passed into the possession of Wonder Wears, who, it is thought, continued the same kind of manufacture. The establishment was afterward run by Robert Wood from England, but the industry it was designed to promote was not of long continuance. The building later on was converted into a chair factory, but finally gave place, some forty years ago, to more important and remunerative business interests. Benjamin and Franklin Wyman also made sateen a year or two in the Carding Machine Building, soon to be mentioned.

**Fulling Cloth.** As an aid to the manufacture just noted, and to give proper finish to the cloth produced, a fulling mill was built at Wachusettville, in the year 1791, which soon came into the possession of David Wyman, who, with the exception of one or two years' partnership with Elisha Hall, carried on business by himself until the decline of the industry upon which it was based left him with nothing to do. After the dissolution of the partnership referred to, Mr. Hall purchased some half a dozen acres of land a little below the outlet of the Town Meadows, on the east side of the road, running past the residence of Willard Battles, and erected thereon, besides a



dwelling house, another fulling mill at or near a point in the stream more recently occupied by the chair shop of Edmund Nichols and his sons. After running it a few years the property passed successively to the ownership of Ethan A. Greenwood, Reuben Bond, Jesse Stone, and Elias Evans, the last three of whom continued there the cloth finishing business, which finally came to an end some time before that of Mr. Wyman, and for the same reason.

**Wool Carding.** An industry closely related to the last-named, and one, like that, dependent upon the home manufacture of cloth and kindred goods, was that of carding wool by machinery, which superseded the old, tedious, hand working method of pristine days. The first authentic knowledge obtained of the carding mill, which was located opposite the sawmill at the head of Wachusettville, dates back to the year 1805, when Eleazer Rider of Holden sold it, with the right to draw water to run it from the pond on the other side of the road, to Joseph Rider of Westminster. In 1819 Mr. Rider sold to Joel Merriam, who carried on the business for some years. Subsequent owners were Asa Farnsworth, Jr., Benjamin Wyman, David Wyman, and finally Franklin Wyman, under whose direction the building, after being used awhile as a satinet factory and chair shop, was at last removed.

**Getting out Lumber.** Full particulars of the building of the first sawmill in the township, at the locality where the Wachusettville reservoir dam now stands, were presented in some of the earlier pages of this work. This was but the first of a long list of similar establishments that in after years were set up in different parts of the town, in order to convert the immense existing forest growths into lumber for building and other uses at home and abroad, as the demand might be. Space will allow little more than the name and situation of these, as they have been found at different periods of the township's history.

As early as 1762 there was a mill of this sort on the privilege in the rear of the Nichols Bros.' chair manufactory. It was probably built by Benjamin Bigelow, who owned the lot on which it stood, No. 5, some ten years, and who sold it, at the date given, to his brothers, Elisha and Jabez Bigelow. The power available at that point has been utilized with occasional intervals from that to the present time. In 1765 a sawmill stood upon the site of what has been known for two or three generations as the "Raymond Mill." It was no doubt erected by Philip Bemis, Jr., oldest son of the third settler in the township. It was successively owned after he sold it by Daniel Munjoy, William Baldwin, Thomas Brigden, Nathan Howard, and his son, Joseph Howard; also in part by Joseph Howard, Jr., Benjamin Howard, Jonas Cutler, David Wyman, and perhaps others, and finally by Maj. Nathan Raymond, and his sons Nathan Raymond, Jr., and Abijah H. Raymond, its last active proprie-



tor. It has been repeatedly remodeled, and once, at least, rebuilt during the long period of its existence—one hundred and twenty-five years.

About the same date, Dea. Joseph Miller put up a sawmill on land owned by him in the easterly part of the town, which included the lower end of the village of Wachusettville. It stood a few rods above the site occupied more recently by a mill of the same kind belonging to Benjamin Wyman, and near a blacksmith shop still extant. It was owned afterward, and probably operated, by Asa Farnsworth, Ephraim Robbins, and Phineas Leonard under whose administration it ceased to be. At a later and unknown date, a mill was established half a mile below the last, near the town line, by a Mr. Goulding from Phillipston, as tradition reports it. Among its owners were Benjamin Glazier, Ezekiel Sawin, Ebenezer Sawin, and Joseph Brown. Attached to the gristmills of Dr. Harvey and John Goodale in the northerly part of the town, of which mention will soon be made, there were sawmills which were in more or less active operation for the greater part of a century. The former of these was destroyed by a fire about 1812, and the latter by a flood in 1850.

A sawmill built probably by Elisha Bigelow in the latter part of the last century, and afterwards owned and run by Liberty Partridge whose name it bore, was located on the old County road to Templeton, half a mile west of the well-known Bigelow place. Joel Baker and his son Eber had a mill on the Mare Meadow stream three-fourths of a mile west of the residence of Daniel Harrington, into whose possession it ultimately passed. In 1842 John and Caleb S. Merriam built a sawmill in connection with a chair shop near the present dwelling of Oliver M. Merriam. After experiencing several changes of ownership, it was many years since surrendered to the needs of the chair business, to which it had always been largely tributary. Jonathan and Zachariah Whitman had a sawmill on a small stream coming from the easterly part of Gardner, near what was called Benton's crossing, and also one on the river near their residence in Scrabble Hollow, which was converted into a chair factory and became the center of a prosperous business conducted for many years by Franklin Lombard, and more recently by Daniel C. Miles. Half a mile below, James Puffer had a mill which was ultimately sold to Wilbur F. Whitney and moved to South Ashburnham. The mill of Whitman and Hall, which stood for a few years on the Town Meadow stream below Raymond's, and the well-known George Smith mill near Theodore S. Wood's, built by William Wiswall, completes, it is believed, the list of this class of woodworking establishments. It is proper to state that in several of them the production of shingles formed a not unimportant part of the business pursued.





**Grain Grinding.** At the outset the inhabitants of Naragansett No. 2 were obliged to go to Lancaster in order to have their corn and other cereals converted into meal for the making of bread and other uses as an article of food, or resort to the slow processes of the "pestle and mortar," the use of stones selected for the purpose, or other rude methods of pioneer life. The inconveniences and difficulties thus experienced were obviated and overcome by the erection, in 1741, as elsewhere narrated, of a gristmill at the outlet of Meetinghouse Pond, near the residence of the late John K. Learned. Seth Walker, who put up the structure and became the first "miller" of the township, sold to Andrew Darby in 1748, in whose possession, and that of his son John, it remained about seventy years, serving well the needs of the community until too old and dilapidated for further usefulness. In 1766 a similar mill, in connection with a sawmill, was built on North or Whitman's River, by Dr. Zachariah Harvey from Princeton. This establishment was afterwards known as Taylor's mill and Sawyer's mill, and yet more recently as Brooks' mill. Some years subsequent to the erection of this last-named mill one was put up in the extreme north part of the town on Phillips Brook by John Goodale, and run by him for a long time. He was succeeded in it by Abijah Lewis, Ai Osborne, Allen B. and George Wood.

About 1790 the Narrows or Wachusettville gristmill was erected. This served the needs of the greater part of the town for half a century or more, when it was converted to other uses and finally removed, as hereafter noted. A few years later one was put up by Ezra Taylor on the brook that crosses Bacon Street, at the site of the "Red mill." It had but a brief existence. The property passed out of Mr. Taylor's hands in 1816, though grain grinding may have been carried on there awhile by the next owner, Arna Bacon. A gristmill was run in connection with the Whitman sawmill at Scrabble Hollow for a while, but by whom it was put in has not been ascertained. It was in operation during the ownership of Merriam and Whitney, 1831-1833, and of the Monroe brothers afterward. In or about the year 1872, the building erected some sixteen years before on the stream running near the railroad station by Caleb S. Merriam for a chair manufacturing establishment, was converted into a grain grinding and flour making mill. It soon passed to the ownership of his son, Eli H. Merriam, who has built up an extensive and prosperous business in connection with a general grain and flour trade.

**Brickmaking.** The presence of clay in different localities within the limits of the town made the production of brick possible, and that industry has been carried on until a recent date to a sufficient extent to supply the home demand, with an excess for the outside market. The first manufacturer of this



article here appears to have been Joseph Hosley, on the farm now owned by Doctor Liverpool. He furnished brick for the first schoolhouse, built in 1767. The business was continued for many years by his successor in the ownership of the place, Timothy Heywood, who purchased it in 1777. Richard Graves and his son Levi, in the same neighborhood, were also brick-makers, as were Richard Baker, his son Deacon Joel, and grandson Eber, the last of the trade in town. Brick were made somewhat extensively by Benjamin Bigelow on the Job Seaver estate, and by Reuben Sawin near the residence of his late grandson, Luke Sawin. It is said that the brick in the house now owned by William H. Benjamin were manufactured on the place a few rods in the rear of the site which the building occupies.

**Potash Making.** An important article of commerce in the olden time was potash, for the production of which, first started in this country by Joseph and Caleb Wilder of Lancaster, there have been at least six manufactories in town: one on the southerly part of the farm lately owned by James Puffer in Scrabble Hollow; one where the house connected with the bakery now stands, in the central village; one on the easterly slope of Meetinghouse Hill, near the old common; one in the lot opposite the residence of Hobart Raymond; one on the Williams farm, near the southeast schoolhouse; and one in the lower part of Wachusettville. It is not known by whom these were operated, except that Nathan Corey did business in the last, after purchasing that and the adjacent property in 1812.

**Mill- and Wheelwrighting.** Reuben Sawin, who came to Westminster with his father Stephen in 1760, was a mill- and wheelwright, and constructed most if not all the water wheels that were built in the town and vicinity during the remainder of the century. He was also a maker of spinning wheels, and probably of looms and many other articles of a like nature. His nephew, Sullivan, who lived where Samuel Bridge now does, was for many years engaged in the same line of business.

**Iron Manufactures.** The production of various kinds of iron goods,—nails, scythes, hoes, etc., was carried on, as elsewhere detailed, at Wachusettville, where buildings were erected and equipped for the purpose about the year 1780. They occupied very nearly the site of the present lower paper mill. A dozen years later a trip hammer with accompanying appliances was established near where the upper paper mill now stands, for the prosecution of the same general kind of work. This last establishment was managed for some time by Joseph Dale, as is well remembered by the older inhabitants of the neighborhood. In 1792 Edmund Barnard, who seems to have been the founder of "The Forge," so-called, first referred to, having sold out his interest in that enterprise, built a dam on the Meetinghouse Pond stream some fifty rods below the old gristmill





site, and put up a shop of a similar nature, which he probably run while he lived. Remains of the dam are still to be seen there. So far as can be ascertained the last manager of the concern was a Mr. Farwell, a scythe manufacturer, also remembered by a few of the oldest inhabitants. Samuel Mosman, Jr., was an ironworker of a varied sort, having a shop at Scrabble Hollow for many years. His kinsman, Abel, was skilled in the same craft, carrying on business in a small establishment located below where Silas Mosman now lives, on a stream of water flowing from Beech Hill. Several of the common blacksmiths of the town, in connection with their ordinary lines of work, engaged in some special manufactures of the same general character. Philip Amsden, for instance, who some seventy or eighty years ago had a shop in the southwest part of the town, opposite where the widow of Norman Seaver resides, is said to have made steelyards and screw augurs, the first of the latter produced in this part of the country; and Greenleaf Lamb in the central village acquired a somewhat extensive reputation for the excellence of the carriage springs, hay and manure forks, edge tools, etc., sent out from his establishment.

**Charcoal Making.** To supply the several shops and manufactories just mentioned, and others like them in this and neighboring towns, the production of charcoal from the ample forests formerly existing once gave employment to a considerable number of men.

**Cabinetmaking.** In 1786 Silas Perry from Leominster bought the small house lot now occupied by the widow of Marshall Eaton in the center of the town, and, having erected a dwelling and a shop adjacent, commenced the making of cabinet ware, continuing the business for ten or twelve years, when he sold out to John Miller and Edward Kendall. Mr. Kendall afterward purchased Miller's interest and went on with the business there awhile, but finally transferred it to a building which stood on the corner diagonally opposite the chair factory of Nichols brothers. His successors in the same locality were his two sons, Edward and George Kendall, well and honorably known in town a generation ago. Jonas Cutting was also a cabinetmaker of long standing and good reputation, having a shop attached to his dwelling house located on the easterly corner of Main and Bacon streets. Church pulpits were his speciality. Specimens of his work are still extant in this and other towns, attesting to his superior skill and conscientious fidelity in the production of that line of goods. Samuel Brooks, son of Isaac, in the extreme north part of Westminster, was also a cabinetmaker, doing an extensive business for many years and inducting many apprentices into a knowledge of the trade. His shop, with a dwelling near by, was located on a small stream flowing from the north into Phillips Brook, whence he derived power to run the machinery employed in prosecuting his work.



His son, Ira, had a similar establishment on the main stream below. Both finally went to Ashburnham.

**Coopering.** Early in the history of the town a considerable number of its inhabitants supplemented their farming operations by the manufacture of pails, noggins, tubs, butter-boxes, barrels, and other forms of cooperware, partly to supply their own wants and partly as a source of income by outside sales. Such work could be done in the winter time or on stormy days at other seasons of the year, without interfering with their customary occupation. So generally did this practice prevail at one time that more than forty cooper shops are known to have had a place in town, scattered in all directions among the rural population. In some instances coopering came to be the leading, or perhaps the sole, employment, as the use of such goods increased and the demands of the general market multiplied. Franklin Wyman gave particular attention to this line of manufacture at one time, carrying on a business requiring many workmen and occupying several of the buildings originally designed for other uses in the village of Wachusettville.

**Cardboard Making.** A few farmers also to fill up the vacant spaces of the year and augment their annual income, slender enough at the best, engaged in the work of getting out cardboards, as they were termed, to be properly mounted elsewhere and fitted either for grooming purposes or for making rolls of wool or other material as a part of domestic cloth manufacturing. Usually some otherwise unoccupied room in the dwelling was devoted to this craft, but buildings were now and then erected for its especial benefit. One of these stood on the east side of the road nearly opposite the Wachusettville reservoir dam. Simple machines were frequently devised in aid of the work, run by hand or foot power. In some families, moreover, the setting of card teeth, before the invention of machinery for the purpose, constituted a by no means unimportant adjunct to the regular calling in life; men, women, and children uniting therein to obtain means sufficient for the needs of the household, or to add thereto some desired comfort or luxury otherwise unattainable.

**The Manufacture of Oil.** About the year 1790, Ebenzer Jones from Princeton came to town, and having established himself in trade, as is believed, at the old Marsh house on the common, purchased a water privilege on the small stream which the highway crosses north of the residence of the late James F. Bruce, and erected upon it a mill for the manufacture of oil, which he presumably run while he remained here. After he left, it passed into the hands of his nephew, Farwell Jones, who sold it in 1802 to Rufus Dodd, then in business at the Bradbury store, recently occupied by Jerome Whitman. The building was eventually removed by Asa Farnsworth. Remnants of the dam are still extant.



**Tanning and Currying.** There have been no less than five tanneries in Westminster during the past hundred years, though the precise dates at which the earlier ones were started have not been ascertained. July 16, 1764, Joshua Everett, who had been in the place several years, bought the property in the central village afterwards known as the "Penniman tavern" estate, now owned by Edwin L. Burnham, and probably not long after began the tanning business. He was succeeded in 1782 by Wm. Penniman, and he in 1827 by David Forbush, whose son Jos. W. Forbush, continued the business on the premises till 1856, when he gave way to Joseph Pierce, the last of the trade there. For some years, Mr. Forbush had, as a tributary to his regular calling, a mill for grinding bark by water power, located a few rods from Main Street on the north side of the Fitchburg and Leominster road. About the year 1790, Phineas Gates of Stow, the brother-in-law of the senior Asa Farnsworth, located near him in the lower part of Wachusettville, his house being on the south side of the stream, nearly opposite the present dwelling of Samuel H. Sprague. He was a tanner by trade and had a yard with needful appliances on the intervalle below. The business was probably given up there at the time of his death in 1803. A tannery once existed on the present Andrew C. Ham place, half a mile north of the town hall, where remnants of the vats were to be seen a generation or two since. It was started and carried on by Jacob Brown, the first resident on the premises. He is supposed to have been the only man in the business there. Early in the century, David Forbush established the tanning trade in Scrabble Hollow, having for a partner for a few years his brother, Manasseh S., who subsequently purchased his interest and continued the manufacture of leather as sole proprietor and manager. Otis Titus came to town in 1813 or 1814, and, having purchased land in the central village of Timothy Doty, erected a dwelling house and started a tannery adjoining that of Mr. Penniman just mentioned, where he carried on business during the greater part of his active life.

**Saddle and Harness Making.** The manufacture of saddles was an important industry in days when horseback riding was the principal means of conveyance, and from this harness making was naturally evolved at a more recent date. Lieut. Peletiah Everett, also an innholder, was engaged in the occupation as early as 1784 and perhaps earlier, having then been a resident here for several years. Very likely there were those who worked at the trade before him, though no records appear to that effect. William Whiting was carrying it on at one of the Woodward houses, half a mile northwest of the center, in 1795. At a later day Alvin Upham located on Main Street and had a shop where George W. Bruce's store now is, in which he was engaged in the same kind of manufacture for many years. He





was succeeded by Milton Joslin, who, after a time, transferred his business to the opposite side of the street.

**The Manufacture of Hats.** Nehemiah Shumway, son of Doctor Shumway, was a hatter of some note, and had a small factory in the little valley twenty or thirty rods southeast of his father's house, now the residence of Charles Mosman. The same trade was carried on more recently by Gilman Thurston, in a well-remembered building which stood on the south side of the street, opposite Thomas S. Eaton's dwelling house.

**Tape Making.** One William Huddleston, who lived in the old house on the southwesterly border of the common, below the Abraham Wood place, early in this century, was a manufacturer of different varieties of tape, having for his use a machine, presumably of his own invention, that antedated, if it did not suggest, those of more recent construction and of greater capacity for the production of that kind of goods.

**Tailoring and Dressmaking.** In the olden time the manufacture of clothing for men's, women's, and children's wear, was done for the most part, as already stated, by the wives and daughters of each household, whose training for domestic duties included this special branch of handicraft. As the years went on, however, there appeared a class of persons, women usually, who made a definite calling of this kind of work, serving a regular apprenticeship to it and supplying the public needs in regard thereto. Professional dressmakers and tailresses there were, going from house to house as their labors were required, and fitting out the family in their particular line of usefulness. Later on rooms or shops were established for the production of garments for male or female use respectively, to which people resorted as necessity or occasion required. Many still living will readily call to mind different persons, who, a generation or more ago, were provided with the proper varieties of material and other equipments, and who possessed the skill needful to repair, remodel, or replenish and amplify, as the case might demand, the wardrobe of the feminine portion of the community, and also those who stood ready to answer the corresponding call on the part of the sterner sex. Among the latter were Jacob Ames, who had for a term of years a tailor's shop at the so-called Doty store; and Nahum B. Howe, whose place of business was in the second story of what is now the engine house at the center of the town.

**Boot and Shoemaking.** Similar is the history of the boot and shoemaking industry in Westminster, though there were trained "cordwainers" among the first settlers, as there were carpenters and weavers who had served a regular apprenticeship in their respective vocations. The usual method by which this class of artisans served the public to begin with, and even during the first quarter of the present century, or later, was that of visiting the families in which their labors were



needed once or twice a year, and stopping long enough to supply all the members with the requisite outfit in this particular, using material derived from the employer's own flocks and herds suitably prepared by the tanners and curriers of the town—a method or practice familiarly designated as “whipping the cat.” Shoe shops were a thing unknown in the early days. The first one reported was that of Bezaleel Baker, located somewhere in the village, about the year 1785. It was not of long continuance, as Mr. Baker left the place for Marlboro', N. H., in 1790. Reuben Fenno, Dea. John Foskett, and Newell Young have had shops more recently, in which only custom work has been done. The only manufactory of boots and shoes for the trade ever established here was that of Aaron Smith, just referred to, in which about a dozen men were employed, turning out some twenty thousand dollars' worth of goods a year, and yielding profits sufficient to enable the proprietor to set up and carry on a larger business elsewhere, in which an ample fortune was ultimately realized.

**Manufacture of Bass Viols.** Somewhere about the year 1820 Joseph Minott, who had previously been associated with his brother, Jonathan, in common joinery and house building, began in a small way the manufacture of bass viols in a shop near his residence, on the site now occupied by the Baptist Church. Though doing most of the labor himself, with the assistance of his sons, he yet built up a very respectable and remunerative business, turning out upon the market a class of goods whose excellence in tone and workmanship reflected much credit upon the maker, and gave him a wide and an enviable reputation among musical people.

**Straw Braiding and Bonnet Making.** An important industry in its day and time, giving employment to many women and children in the community, and aiding very essentially, in many cases, in adapting family resources to family needs, was the production of straw braid and the attendant manufacture of bonnets for both domestic use and the general trade. By whom the first work of this kind in town was done is not known, nor the date of such work. In the *Massachusetts Spy* of Oct. 4, 1809, Mrs. Persis (Miles) Sweetser advertised for 20,000 yards of straw braid, but whether for the purpose of making it into bonnets herself, or for other parties to work into marketable goods, does not appear. It has been thought that the daughters of Abel Wood, Esq., were among the earliest braiders here, the results of their labors being purchased by the enterprising wife of Joseph Mudge, who run a small store in the house now owned and occupied by Mrs. Joseph Woodbury, then the residence of the Mudge family. Whether bonnets were ever made by her, or under her supervision, has not been ascertained, but it is hardly probable. The industry started by these women was taken up and developed





by others coming after them, and notably by Joseph Whitman, one of the leading merchants in town for a generation, who built up this special interest into commanding and highly profitable proportions, in connection with his regular traffic in general merchandise. At its most prosperous period, about 1840, it returned him a net income of many thousand dollars annually.

**Chair Seating.** To fill the vacancy made in the industrial activities of the household and community by the decline of the straw and bonnet trade, which, after a time, occurred, there came in very opportunely the business of "chair seating," as it was termed, an adjunct of the manufacture, in the town and vicinity, of those kinds of chairs, in the construction of which East India cane or "rattan," as it is called, forms an important and characteristic part of the material used. This kind of work has given, and still gives, employment to the same class of persons as straw braiding did, augmented by men whose health and strength enfeebled or impaired by sickness or advancing age, disqualify them for severer tasks. For fifty years or more it has been followed greatly to the advantage of the public at large, being, as it is, not only the principal or sole source of income to many families, but an important auxiliary to the general thrift and prosperity.

**Berry Picking and Preserving.** Not unworthy of notice in this review is the double industry growing out of the abundant production of various kinds of wild berries in the pastures and meadows of the town. Not a few farms, reduced in value in other respects, have yet, by reason of this newly developed source of profit, been able to retain something of their old-time importance as possessing resources from which means of livelihood may be derived and a supply of many of the comforts of life. The income to many individuals and families, arising from the simple picking of berries in their season and sending them to the ever-enlarging market, is very considerable, such as if derived from some special trade or line of manufacture would be deemed highly satisfactory and gratifying. Moreover, it is well known that in the matter of working the berries up into various forms of preserves or other kinds of choice comestibles, one citizen of Westminster, Preston Ellis, not only attained something of notoriety in the business world, but a handsome competency or fortune. He has a successor in his son P. P. Ellis.

**Silk Culture.** Some attempt was made about half a century ago to establish here the silk-producing industry. Orchards of mulberry trees were set out and grown by Thomas Kendall, Jr., and possibly others in town. Silkworms were produced, and for a few years a considerable quantity of cocoons was obtained as the result of the endeavor. But the conditions proved unfavorable, and the experiment was abandoned.

**Carriage Manufacturing.** After the death of Joseph Minott and the consequent termination of the bass viol indus-



try, the shop in which that business had been prosecuted was devoted for a term of years to carriage making, under the direction of Benjamin H. Whitney. More recently, Sanford Sawyer had a similar establishment half a mile east of the village on the Fitchburg road.

**The Manufacture of Chairs.** At what date, in what place, and by whom this calling was introduced to the attention of the community has not been positively ascertained. Sixty or more years ago it was carried on in a small way by a number of persons, who were doing their work mostly by hand in little shops located here and there throughout the town. As time went on, and this branch of industry grew in size and importance, giving promise of a great future, there sprang up numerous factories in different directions, which were operated by water power, designed and equipped for the purpose of supplying the increasing demand for chair-stock. One of these was erected on Whitman's river by Charles Smith, one on a small stream west of where Eugene Gates now lives by Sumner May and Asa Ray, one in the Minott neighborhood by Ivers Brooks, one in the south part of the town by Calvin Whitney, and another just above by John and Caleb S. Merriam, one at the foot of Wachusett by Joel Foskett, one at the foot of Bacon street by John Lewis, one half a mile below, on the south branch of the same stream, by David B. Barnes, afterwards converted into a carriage and wheelwright shop; one near the outlet of the Town Meadows by Edmund Nichols, and two in turn, still further down the stream, by Caleb S. Merriam. In most of them the manufacture of chairs was established either at the outset or later in their history, the introduction of machinery, after a little time, superseding to a large extent the slower processes in which hand or foot power was employed, thus greatly facilitating the work and increasing the production many fold.

It is not possible to present a list of all those who at one time or another have been engaged in this particular industry. Only the names of the more important ones will be mentioned, accompanied by brief notes, with a fuller account of those who have built up large establishments, and who, by giving employment to considerable numbers of people, as well as otherwise, have contributed very essentially to the prosperity and well-being of the community.

So far as has been learned, Nathaniel Wheeler, son of an early settler of the same name, was the first person in town who took up chair making as a distinctive calling in life. He resided for some years on the place near Gardner line now owned by Mr. J. Brown, and there he plied his useful trade. He made the old-fashioned, high-backed style of chair, so well remembered by elderly people, having straight posts and stretchers, with seats and backs of thinly split wood about three-fourths of an



inch wide neatly interwoven and securely fastened to the frame. It had a rustic appearance, and served an excellent purpose in its day. More solid, elaborate, and artistic styles came in at a later period, of which, however, little in this connection can be said.

John Derby was undoubtedly one of the earliest chair makers in Westminster. He lived on the John K. Learned place, and had a shop on the site where the one used for blacksmithing was afterwards located. His son, Almon Derby, was also a chair maker, well-known in his day, doing business in different localities—at or near his father's place, in a part of the old grist-mill at Wachusettville, and at his later residence on the North Common road. For a few years John Edgell, now of Gardner, was his partner, and a skilful workman at the trade. Nathan Corey made chairs in the house close by the paint shop of David W. Hill, which house was built by him about the year 1820. Major Page, who owned the same place afterward, followed the same calling as he had done in other localities before taking up his residence there. John Lewis, who is supposed to have been the first maker of cane-seat chairs in town, began in the old cabinet shop that formerly stood near the dwelling of Mrs. Marshall Eaton, where he then lived, moving thence to his well-known residence on Bacon street. David B. Barnes started the manufacture of chairs in the building referred to erected by him on the Fitchburg road. Asa Cutting followed the trade in the present David Hill paint shop, a part of which he built for the purpose. Edmund Nichols carried on business in the establishment put up by him and furnished with machinery, in the rear of the residence of the late Abijah H. Raymond, as Lorenzo D. and Albion Wheeler did in the shop of Ivers Brooks near the line of Gardner. Charles Smith engaged in the same manufacture in his building on Whitman's river, and was succeeded by Albert Forbush, who considerably increased the amount of production there. The old mill of Jonathan and Zachariah Whitman in Scrabble Hollow having been remodeled and fitted up with appropriate machinery was run as a chair factory for several years by John Whitney, 2d, Aaron and Pearson Cowee, the Monroe brothers, John Mosman and Walter Carr, Franklin Lombard and Daniel C. Miles, of whom more presently. The old meetinghouse on the Common having been abandoned as a place of worship and purchased by Dr. John White, Joseph Whitman, and Stillman Brooks, was moved to the site of the former grist-mill of Ezra Taylor near Eliot street, and made ready with water power attached for mechanical uses. A portion of it was supplied with chair making appliances, and occupied for a while by Whitman and Brooks in that interest, and afterward by Joseph M. and Jerome Whitman, sons of the former. Franklin Wyman also carried on the manufacture of chairs before engaging in paper making, utilizing in that behalf the Corey factory and other buildings at Wachusettville.



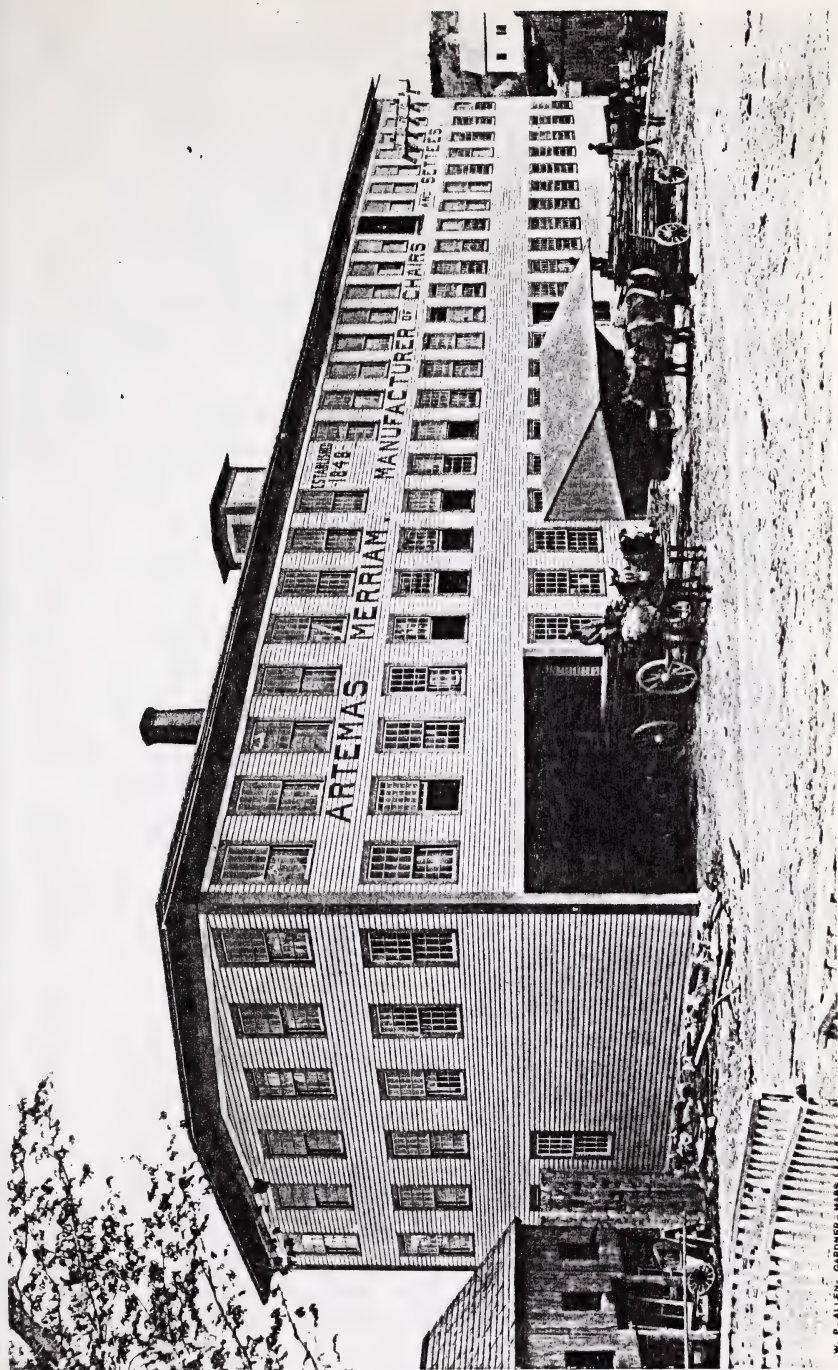


Among those more extensively and more continuously connected with the industry under review was Charles Coolidge, who began his career in the small water shop built by May and Ray in the Beech Hill neighborhood, but soon removed to the Penniman privilege near the Center. He was in business many years, having for a time as partners his brothers, Frank and John R. Coolidge, though for the most part he was sole proprietor and manager. After his decease in 1866, the manufacture was continued by his son, Frederic S. Coolidge, until the destruction of the establishment by fire. John Merriam and his son, Caleb S., fitted up a part of their sawmill in the southerly section of the town for chair making, and commenced operations in 1842. Five years later they sold to Jonas and Oliver, younger sons of John, who at the end of nine years separated, the former continuing the business for a time and then disposing of it to Samuel M. Noyes, who went on with it eleven years longer, and then sold to James Harrington. The latter, however, did not engage in the manufacture of chairs, nor have they been made there since. Caleb S. Merriam, after closing out his interest in the south part of the town, purchased lands on the stream flowing south of the railroad station and near thereto, upon which he, in 1856, erected a shop and resumed his former trade. Some dozen or more years later he removed his chair machinery to a new mill farther up the stream, and after introducing the necessary appliances commenced the grinding of grain at the former place. At a later date he gave up chair making altogether.

Franklin Lombard came to Westminster from Leominster in 1839, and began operations as a comb-maker, to which calling he had been trained. That interest declining, he purchased the property connected with, and including, the Whitman mill previously used as a chair factory by Mosman and Carr, and started the chair business. He continued in it for a generation, with satisfactory results to himself and to those with whom he was associated. He confined himself mostly to woodwork in his operations, but finally entered into partnership with Daniel C. Miles for the purpose of producing cane seat goods. Under this arrangement the facilities for business were much extended, with corresponding results. Subsequently he disposed of his entire interest to Mr. Miles, who, in company with his sons, followed along the established lines for two or three years and then suspended operations in that locality. Mr. Lombard, being advanced in years, has never gone back to his former calling, but remains content to share the lighter labors that are incidentally imposed on him in the quietude of domestic life and amid the comforts and satisfactions which an honestly earned competency enables him to enjoy.

The sketch of the chair manufacture thus far has been retrospective. It belongs chiefly to the past. What remains to be





CHAIR MANUFACTORY OF ARTEMAS MERRIAM.





said has relations to the present time—pertains to what now represents that important industry in the community, and to those having it in charge. Moreover, it belongs to the new era of chair making—the era of centralization, of large establishments, and of focalized activities and operations. The notice of it must needs be brief.

In 1857, two of the older sons of the late Edmund Nichols, associating with themselves James H. Clark, a brother-in-law, and Porter Howard, bought the property formerly belonging to Edward and George Kendall, with lands adjoining, and, after erecting and appropriately equipping a small shop, commenced chair making operations. Going on successfully for some years, they made such enlargements and improvements as the growing enterprise demanded and their means would allow. After repeated changes in the proprietorship and management, the plant and its accessories passed into the possession of Charles and Marcus M. Nichols, younger brothers of the ones just referred to, who at once entered upon a career of increasing prosperity under the name of Nichols Brothers. The main factory was burned in 1881, but the enterprising owners, encouraged by their fellow-townsmen, immediately rebuilt, larger than before, to meet the increasing demand for their goods. They have a small mill for getting out stock in a lumber region in Princeton (No-town district), which is an important adjunct to their home business. They employ regularly about seventy-five workmen, and turn out some seventy or eighty thousand dollars' worth of manufactures annually. (*See note at end of chapter.*)

Sometime about the year 1843, Artemas Merriam began chair making in a small way in a little shop standing a few rods south of the present dwelling of Hobart Raymond, in which he then resided. After an experience of five years there, doing his work at first by hand, but afterwards introducing foot power for the running of some simple machinery, he formed a partnership with his brother-in-law, George Holden, who had not long before started the same line of manufacture at the head of Meetinghouse Pond, and moving thither, laid the foundations of the constantly enlarging and highly successful enterprise which for some time bore the firm name of "Merriam & Holden," of the pleasant hamlet of South Westminster. An old cooper shop, enlarged somewhat, with a small water power available only a few months of the year, furnished a starting point for a most important undertaking. A more commodious building, increased facilities, and a steam engine became a necessity in 1853. Four years later another enlargement of room and power took place. In 1858 Joel Merriam, brother of Artemas, a painter by trade, came into the firm, taking charge of the painting and finishing department. All went on well till 1869, when the manufactory and all its contents were destroyed by fire. To meet the emergency thus created, Daniel C. Miles was admitted



to partnership, and assumed the superintendence of the outdoor lumber interests of the concern. Early in 1873 Mr. Miles retired, and before midsummer both Joel Merriam and George Holden died, leaving the entire establishment in the hands of Artemas Merriam, who soon afterward became sole owner and manager of the establishment,—a position he has continued to hold to date. Increasing prosperity has attended his administration of affairs, the amount of business done aggregating about seventy-five thousand dollars per year, having more than doubled since he assumed control. Employment is given to seventy or eighty men, and means of subsistence are thereby furnished for half as many families.

**Paper Making.** It is elsewhere stated that in or about the year 1845, Franklin Wyman came into possession of all the water power in Wachusettville, with the exception of a single privilege at the lower end owned by his brother Benjamin; and also that a change of circumstances in business affairs, locally and generally, rendered the introduction of some new industry there important and desirable. The owner, therefore, in view of existing facts and conditions, after due deliberation, decided to establish the paper manufacture as a substitute for what had been previously done. He accordingly built and fitted up a mill for that purpose on or near the site of the "Forge," where the lower mill now stands, and let it to Willoughby Wilder, who commenced the business in the place. Two or three years later Mr. Wyman erected and equipped a second mill, where the principal mill now is, which he let to a firm operating under the name of Gibson & Rundlett. After a brief period both of these establishments came back into his hands, when he assumed the responsibility of carrying on the manufacture by himself. He was eminently successful in the undertaking. Business increased rapidly under his management. Important improvements were made, and means were taken to utilize the power resident in the stream and its tributaries to the utmost extent. The old gristmill was reconstructed and made into a paper mill. The sawmill pond and its accessory, Wachusett Lake, were converted into a vast reservoir, to hold the surplus water of the winter and spring for use in the dryer portions of the year. Meetinghouse Pond was also made to serve in the same way the same prudential end. For some eighteen years the manufacture went prosperously on under Mr. Wyman's sole ownership and charge, the amount of goods produced aggregating at times two hundred and fifty or three hundred thousand dollars annually.

In 1869 Mr. Wyman disposed of half his paper making property, with all its appurtenances, to Daniel P. Crocker of Fitchburg, and the two carried on business in company for a little time, when Mr. Wyman bought back Mr. Crocker's interest and was himself in sole and separate possession once more. He soon after bargained the entire plant and its belongings to







M. P. ALLEN, GARDNER, MASS.

# SOUTH WESTMINSTER VILLAGE.





H. W. Clark of Boston, an old paper manufacturer, who at once entered upon large and costly schemes for improving his purchase and increasing its power of production. He however retained proprietorship but a short time after his plans were consummated, when he arranged with Mr. Wyman to take the property back again. Since that date Mr. Wyman, who, after relinquishing business, had removed to Worcester, has been manufacturing in his own behalf, under the management of his son, Charles F. Wyman, a resident at the present time of Fitchburg. The amount of business done has been greatly reduced from its former proportions, though it now aggregates more per year than that of any other industrial establishment in town. (*See note at end of chapter.*)

**The Bakery.** In the same year upon which the paper manufacture was commenced at Wachusettville, as just noted, Alfred Wyman, brother of Franklin, now residing in Worcester, purchased the dwelling house of R. P. Chase in the center of the town, with a small lot of land adjoining, and having erected a shop and furnished it with the appliances then commonly in use for the making of bread, began business in that line of production, with Theodore P. Locke for a partner, an old and experienced hand at the trade. The partnership was of short continuance, Mr. Wyman soon becoming sole owner and manager. By careful and conscientious attention to his work, the introduction of the most approved kinds of machinery, the employment of skilled operatives, and the adoption of new and improved methods and expedients suggested by study and experience, he built up an enterprise which proved to be not only an unquestioned success as a business venture, but one of great public utility and advantage. He offered to the community an article of consumption which rose at once to almost universal favor, being in great demand not only at home but in the surrounding country for a dozen or twenty miles away—in all localities, indeed, where it was known. The reputation which he created for the “Westminster bread” accrued greatly to the advantage of his successors as well as of himself, giving them a good start and contributing not a little to that prosperity which, by following the same lines of effort pursued by him, and by taking advantage of what has been gained to the art, at home and abroad, since his day, they have, with scarce an exception, been fortunate enough to secure. Those successors have been Harrison G. Whitney, Joseph W. Forbush, Harrison G. Whitney again, Chas. T. Damon, Damon & Burnham, Daniel C. Miles, Damon & Burnham a second time, Edwin L. Burnham, E. L. Burnham & Son, George N. Haynes, the proprietor and manager in 1890, who has recently sold to J. Boardman.

So closes the record of the various kinds of handicraft—agricultural and mechanical—which have been carried on in



town since it was founded, and which have contributed so largely to the comfort, welfare, prosperity, and happiness of all classes and conditions of people within its borders. It remains now to give proportionate consideration to what may be termed the several mercantile interests and activities which have been, or still are, represented here.

### MERCHANTS AND TRADERS.

By whom the first store for the retailing of goods in common use was opened in Westminster can not be stated with absolute certainty. It is altogether probable, however, that to the ex-minister of the township, Rev. Elisha Marsh, belongs whatever honor is derived from that particular line of public service. He resided in town some dozen years after he was deposed from the pastoral office. In 1761, three years subsequent to that occurrence, he was licensed to sell spirituous liquors by the Worcester County court, and also in several following years. These facts, considered in connection with that of his having no known calling or profession otherwise, save as an occasional operator in real estate, seem to justify the opinion that he was the first merchant here. If so, it is to be presumed that his place of trade was in a part of his dwelling house at the southeast corner of the old Common, or in a separate building close by.

The successor of Mr. Marsh was Thomas Brigden, who purchased the estate in 1770, and who was taxed the following year for stock in trade to the amount of £150. Mr. Brigden died in 1774, and the property passed into the possession of Michael Gill, who carried on business there until he left town in 1783. The next person engaged in merchandising at this point appears to have been Ebenezer Jones, who, so far as can be ascertained, was the last trader occupying the premises.

In 1768 Dr. Zachariah Harvey, who was then living at his new home near North or Whitman's River (Asa Brook's place), took out a license for the sale of liquors, but he did this probably as auxiliary to his profession, there being no evidence that he engaged in any other kind of trade. Within the memory of persons now living, however, Asa Brooks had a small store at the same locality.

Samuel Gerrish, great-grandfather of the present town clerk, came to town in 1777, and, having purchased lot No. 4 and settled upon it, opened a public shop for purposes of general merchandry. It was in an ell of his dwelling house, which stood on or near the site of the present imposing residence of Mrs. Phineas W. Reed.

Elijah Hager was a licensed retailer in the years 1782-5, carrying on business in that line probably in connection with a general West India and dry goods trade at the original Hager





dwelling where W. C. Foskett now resides. Two years later Peletiah Everett received a similar license, and it is to be presumed had also a common country store. He was located at the "Pond place," where F. M. Carpenter lives. Mr. Everett was also, for some years, a public innholder at the same stand.

According to the town records, Silas Beaman from Boylston, who afterwards married the oldest daughter of Rev. Mr. Rice, had a store on the old Common in 1792. It was probably a part of the brick dwelling house remodeled within a few years by Capt. Ethan W. Holden. He seems to have been succeeded in business by one Thomas Rice, of whom little is known, and Mr. Rice by Isaac Miles, son of Reuben Miles, for a short time. In 1810 Augustus Emerson from Acton came into possession of the property and opened a hotel on the premises. At the same time the store was run by William L. and Charles Foster from Littleton. After a few years Mr. Emerson gave up the hotel business and took charge of the retail trade department of the concern, which he managed for a long while. Salmon Miller was temporarily his partner. Joel Wood was the successor of Mr. Emerson, and it is believed the last merchant on the premises.

Reuben Sawin had a store in the latter part of the last century in the south part of the town, on the place more recently occupied by his grandson, Luke Sawin. He seems to have been the only trader in that section.

About the year 1800, or perhaps a little earlier, Rev. Mr. Rice built the house formerly standing near where the dwelling of Alonzo D. Bolton now is, and set up his son-in-law, Farwell Jones, in mercantile business there, deeding him the property in 1801. Two years later Mr. Jones sold to Moses Greenwood of Hubbardston, whose son Aaron was in trade a few years, after which the building passed to other uses.

In 1801 Farwell Jones purchased the land on which what is known as the Bradbury house stands, and erected a building, partly for a residence and partly for purposes of trade, into which he moved from his former location on the hill. Mr. Jones died in 1804, and his widow seems to have continued the business until succeeded by Rufus Dodd and Zadoc Sawyer, who were in partnership some time, the latter going on by himself after the death of the former in 1810. Later Mr. Sawyer had for an associate David Cobb, to whom he sold his interest in 1815. Joel Wood was in possession of the property and traded there afterward. It was purchased by William S. Bradbury in 1829.

In the year 1798 Silas Smith, who lived on the well-known Smith place, half a mile north of Scrabble Hollow, was licensed to sell intoxicants, and it is presumed that he had at that time a store also for general merchandise. Such was the case at a later date. He was in trade for many years, but is not known



to have had a successor, though his son, Capt. Silas, may have been such for a brief period.

Early in the present century a store was built on or near the site of the Westminster Bank, by Capt. Stephen Hoar, then proprietor of all the land on the south side of the main street between where the bakery now stands and the Hubbardston road. He sold it, in 1806, to Doctor Shumway, whose son-in-law, Samuel Cobb, and David Cobb, opened it for trade soon afterward—probably its first occupants. From Doctor Shumway the property passed through the hands of his son Nehemiah into the possession of Joel Wood in 1815. Mr. Wood is understood to have carried on business there for a time, finally selling to Joseph Whitman in 1829.

In 1803 Dr. Daniel Bartlett started a drug and medicine trade in connection with the sale of liquors and other articles pertaining to his profession, at his residence near what was then the west end of the village. This was the beginning of what, after various modifications and changes, became the miscellaneous traffic conducted by Oliver Estey for many years, and finally by Estey and Giles.

David Forbush, elsewhere mentioned, on account of failing health occasioned by work in the tannery, left that occupation for a time and engaged in trade at Scrabble Hollow, where he was located. He subsequently gave way to his brother, Manasseh S., and Joseph Whitman, and removed to the center of the town, where he resumed his original vocation.

Farwell Cowee, son of David who lived on the North Common, opened a store near his father's residence about 1816. Some six or eight years later he gave up business at that point and moved to the Center. His successor was Asa W. Rand.

About the same date Charles Smith, residing on the road to South Ashburnham half a mile above Whitman's hotel, took out a license for the sale of spirituous liquors, and is presumed to have carried on in connection therewith the usual traffic of a country store for a few years. Still later his son Milton was in business at the same place.

Joseph Whitman, as just stated, started in trade at Scrabble Hollow with his brother-in-law, Manasseh S. Forbush. After a few years he left there and, having purchased the Shumway store on Main Street, transferred his business to that more promising locality. Later he became owner of the lot adjoining on the east with a dwelling house upon it, in which he afterwards took up his abode. He erected for his use a brick structure, to take the place of the old wooden one, which was subsequently enlarged, and built up for himself in due time a prosperous trade. He made a specialty of the straw braid and bonnet manufacture and traffic, which proved highly remunerative and helpful both to himself and the community. He continued business until advanced years and failing strength



obliged him to give place to younger men. In the midst of his mercantile career he associated with himself Phineas W. Reed, under the firm name of "Whitman & Reed," and later in life his son, Joseph M., under the style of "Joseph Whitman & Son." For about twenty-five years previous to 1861 this store shared the advantage of having the United States post office located therein. It was removed to other quarters at the date named, but returned upon the appointment of the present postmaster, Edward S. Kendall, in 1889.

In the year 1817 Samuel Cooper, in the extreme north part of the town, started a retail trade on his premises, which he continued under varying conditions until far advanced in age.

At what date a store was opened at the house of Joseph Mudge, in the western part of the central village, can not be ascertained. Nor how long it was continued there. It is said by some of the older inhabitants that his wife had charge of it, at least for a while, and that she was the first person in town who dealt in straw braid.

Nathan Corey, who built the house nearly opposite the bakery, now owned by E. L. Burnham, about 1820, seems to have engaged in mercantile business there for a few years, though he appears to have converted the room occupied for that purpose into a chair shop later, during his residence on the premises. Possibly Joel Wood, who bought the property in 1833, was also in trade there, the room being reconverted by him to its former use.

In or about the year 1824 Timothy Doty, who had been keeping the hotel in the Center for ten years before, built the large double house on the adjoining lot with a store close by, and began trade there, continuing it till his last illness, ten years later. He was succeeded by Leander Cowee, Abel S. Wood, Artemas W. Johnson, Harrison Whitney, and perhaps others of brief continuance. For forty or more years the building has been used for a variety of purposes, of which mention need not be particularly made.

William S. Bradbury came from his native place, Hollis, N. H., and opened a store in the extreme north part of the town, a few rods west of what is known as the Chesmore house, on the old County road. This was in 1825. Four years later he purchased, at the Center, the estate with which his name was for a long time identified, and moved his business there, where he remained till his departure elsewhere in 1862.

In addition to the persons above named, who, it has been ascertained with a good degree of certainty, were in trade in Westminster during the first century of its history, and whose places of business have been, for the most part, absolutely determined, there were several others, of whom mention may be made, though very little can be affirmed respecting them. Dr. Asa Miles, who at the time owned and lived on the easterly portion of the present estate of F. A. Merriam, was licensed to





sell spirituous liquors in 1803, to which traffic he may have added drugs and medicines to a limited extent. Samuel Sawin, who resided where Samuel Bridge now does, was similarly favored in 1805; as were also John Barnes in 1813, and Levi Graves, Jr., in 1823, neither of whom have been definitely located at the date given. Moreover, Daniel Putnam seems to have been a trader here in 1812, and Philip Crosby in 1825, but no further knowledge of them has been found.

It is a suggestive fact that, during the entire period thus far covered by this review, nearly every retail merchant in town was authorized to include alcoholic liquors among the articles offered for sale to the general public; while during the greater part of the remainder of the town's history, as will be more fully noticed in another chapter, the opposite has been the case, —the sale of intoxicants, when allowed by law at all, having been restricted to one or two public houses in the place.

Little more will be attempted in this statement concerning the merchants and traders of the town than to present a list of those properly belonging to this class of business men, who have been here within the last generation, and the places occupied by them, with little regard to details. With the exception of a few years' trade carried on by Franklin Wyman at Wachusettville, about a generation since, the stores have been confined to the central village. Of these each will be spoken of in its turn, and its occupants mentioned, as far as possible, in chronological order.

It has been stated that among the occupants of the store erected by Timothy Doty, after his decease in 1835, was Harrison G. Whitney, who is thought to have been the last permanently established there. He moved across the street into a building fitted up for his special use. After a few years he gave up business and was succeeded by a Protective Union which had been organized in town. After the Union dissolved, S. Gerrish Kendall occupied the premises, taking for a partner Wallace Cheney. Mr. Kendall having deceased, Mr. Cheney sold to George W. Bruce, the present incumbent.

The brick store so long owned by Joseph Whitman, and others associated with him passed, after his death in 1860, into the hands of Edmund Nichols, who put it in charge of his younger sons for a while, but soon sold to John B. Day. After Mr. Day came Nathaniel Ames and Charles G. Giles. Mr. Ames dying, Mr. Giles continued the business by himself for ten years. In 1876 he disposed of his stock, good will, etc., to Francis A. and John F. Merriam, sons of the late Joel Merriam, Jr., who operated under the firm name of Merriam Brothers. The former, after a time, bought out the latter, and is at present sole proprietor and manager.

The well-known stand at which William S. Bradbury carried







ALLEN, CARPENTER, MASS.

RESIDENCE AND STORE OF F. A. MERRIAM.





on trade for a generation remained idle some years after he left town. It was then stocked with West India goods and groceries by the Sovereigns of Industry, a co-operative association of some note in its day, which sold at length to Jerome Whitman. Since the retirement of Mr. Whitman from business, in 1889, this old place of traffic has remained unoccupied.

#### PUBLIC HOUSES.

Inns, taverns, or hotels, as places for the accommodation and entertainment of man and beast have been variously termed during the town's history, have had a good representation in the community from the beginning. There are not less than seventeen localities within its present boundaries at which provision has been made, at one time or another, for the traveling public and other transient patronage, since the first settlement in 1737. These can all be determined without any difficulty or doubt, as can the names of those who have presided over them and acted the part of host in them, with perhaps a few unimportant exceptions.

The pioneer innholder here was undoubtedly the first settler, Fairbanks Moor, and his hostelry was about half of the main building now occupied as a dwelling by Hobart Raymond. He was licensed for the position the year after his arrival, 1738. For two years more he was similarly honored and authorized to serve the general public. His conveniences could not have been extensive nor his supplies very abundant, but they were probably equal to the demand. In 1741, 1742, 1743, the township seems to have had no licensed keeper of a public house. In 1744 Mr. Moor was again authorized to act in that capacity, as he was the year following, before the close of which, however, he left the place, returning afterward, but only as a transient resident.

In 1744 an innholder's license was granted to Daniel Hoar, whose place of business was a few rods east of Mt. Pleasant cemetery. There he kept tavern continuously for sixteen years, and intermittently some time afterward. In 1745 Dea. Joseph Holden opened his dwelling at the foot of the pond as a public house, an act which in those days was deemed in no wise inconsistent with the title he bore as an officer in the church. Mr. Holden remained an innkeeper till near the end of his life and was succeeded by his son Abner, who gave up the business when called to more active and responsible public labors incident to the breaking out of the Revolution in 1776, but who resumed and continued it for several years after the war was over.

John Wheeler had a public house for a few years on or near the site of the present meetinghouse of the Congregationalist society, but had no successor. John Rand had a tavern for about ten years on the North Common, beginning in 1773. Farwell Cowee seems to have re-established this tavern in 1819 and continued it till 1823. The same year Jedediah Cooper



started one on the County road in the extreme north part of the town, which was kept open for some years in the present century. His son Samuel succeeded him.

A somewhat famous hostelry for a long period was the large house in the central village occupied formerly by David Forbush and his son, Joseph W.—the present residence of Edwin L. Burnham. It was first opened to the public by the builder, Joshua Everett, in 1777. In 1781 William Penniman purchased the property and continued the business for more than forty years, or until he sold to David Forbush in 1827. The place gained considerable notoriety under his administration, "Penniman's tavern" being noted in all the neighboring region for its good cheer and conviviality. As early as 1778 Peletiah Everett had a public inn where F. M. Carpenter now lives. He continued to dispense hospitality there some twenty years. An inn was established in 1779 by Isaac Williams at the brick dwelling near the schoolhouse of old time District No. 7, and served the public till about the close of the century. Three years subsequently one was opened at the late Benson Bigelow (now R. J. Laver) place by his grandfather, the first Elisha Bigelow. Standing on what was then the main thoroughfare from Lancaster and the lower towns to Athol and the settlements beyond, a large business was very soon built up there, which continued till the construction of the "Turnpike" in 1801, when, the through travel being diverted to the new road, the house was closed to the general public. But for a dozen or fifteen years it was the principal hotel in town, and one of excellent reputation wherever known.

Zachariah Whitman received an innholder's license in 1799, opening a public house in Scrabble Hollow for the accommodation of the increasing travel through that part of the town. He was followed by his sons, Jonathan and Zachariah, and they in turn by their brother-in-law, Manasseh S. Forbush, before whose death, in 1868, the place was closed, having served in the capacity indicated longer than any other in the history of the town, the one in the Center alone excepted.

In the same year in which the Whitman tavern was opened to the public Stephen Hoar, son of the old innholder, Daniel Hoar, erected at the northerly end of the same lot on which his father's dwelling stood, the first installment of the present Westminster hotel, locating himself in it as its first landlord. In 1810 Mr. Hoar died, after which for two or three years it was in charge of his sons, Charles and Ezra, who sold in 1813 to Timothy Doty, and he in turn to Simeon Sanderson in 1833. Mr. Doty seems to have been personally in charge of the house till 1824, when he let it to Col. Oliver Adams, who run it for six years, and was succeeded by John A. Thompson. After Mr. Thompson, who was landlord only a year, Calvin Hayward had it for three years, or until the change of owners, as stated



above. During Mr. Sanderson's proprietorship his brother-in-law, Emory Bates, superintended the establishment. It was subsequently disposed of to Willard Allen, who himself assumed control of it. Mr. Allen died in 1852, and his son Frederick became owner and manager for a time. It was subsequently run for a few years by Loring Jacobs, when Mr. Allen again became landlord. He sold the property to Luther Maynard from Stow, who had charge till his death in 1863, being succeeded by his son-in-law, Ferdinand Dickinson, who greatly enlarged the accommodations and made preparation for summer boarders. Capt. Samuel Beaman afterward served the public there, and a Mr. Leach. He was followed by Merrick Puffer, who kept an excellent house and did a large summer boarding business, selling to the present proprietor, Emerson N. Goddard, May 10, 1884.

Isaac Miles bought the land on which the brick house near the easterly end of the central village now stands—the Doctor White estate—in 1801, and is supposed to have erected that structure directly afterward and opened it as a hotel when completed. He appears to have been succeeded in the management, though not in the ownership, of the place a few years later by Adam Noyes, and he by Stephen Whitney, Jr., who died in 1810. For some time after that date the building does not appear to have been used as a public house. It was purchased in 1816 by Seth Wellington, who reopened it to the public, and who disposed of it in 1818 to Benjamin Davis, and Mr. Davis in turn to Farwell Cowee, the last innholder on the premises.

In the latter part of the last century John Bigelow purchased the Garfield farm, where Daniel E. Hurd now resides, and, after the completion of the turnpike, about 1800, commenced serving the public as a tavern keeper; but the experiment, probably proving unprofitable, was abandoned at the expiration of two years. Not long after, a hotel was running a mile below, in the edge of Fitchburg, which, with the farm attached, was by a legislative act set to Westminster in 1813. The keeper of it then was Thomas Miles, son of Lieutenant John, who ere long gave place to Maj. Stephen W. Webster, well remembered by the older inhabitants of the neighborhood. Mr. Webster was followed by Nathaniel Maynard, Zenas Barney, Amasa Putnam, a Mr. Bruce, and perhaps others, and lastly by Joseph Elmore. The establishment was finally destroyed by fire, though not till after it was closed as a public trysting place.

The brick house at the easterly end of the old common was used as a hotel for many years, under the administration of Augustus Emerson, who also had a store there at the same time, as noted elsewhere. His first innholder's license was taken out in 1811, the last in 1827. The latest of these public institutions, chronicled substantially in the order of their establishment, was that of Nathan Corey, opened in what is now





Wachusettville in 1813, which had an existence of only four years.

It will be noted that this sketch not only locates the seventeen hotels or inns that have furnished accommodations for the traveling public and solicited the patronage of the community at large, but also records, with very few exceptions, the names of those, some fifty in all, who have served as "mine host" and dispensed the diversified hospitalities and honors of those several establishments. It will also be observed that for twenty years or more a single one of them, that in the Center, has sufficed for all existing needs in that department of activity to which they relate, and that for sixty years only two, the one at Scrabble Hollow in addition to the last-named, have had a place within the limits of the town. At some periods of its history no less than seven were running at the same time. Verily, things are greatly changed in this regard.

#### SUPPLEMENT TO CHAPTER XVI.

**Wachusettville Water Power.** A connected sketch of the development of this power is herewith given, although involving in some of the details occasional repetition.

Within the distance of half a mile on the stream running through the main part of this village, and having an aggregate natural fall of about 90 feet, there have been six mill privileges utilized during the history of the township. Three of these were located on lot No. 112 of the original survey; two, it is believed, on No. 107, and one on No. 108. The former of these lots lay longitudinally at the west end of the other two, the boundary line between them running nearly north and south, crossing the stream on or near the site of the present principal paper manufactory. The line between lots 107 and 108, running east and west, crossed the stream nearly opposite the schoolhouse. Of the building of the first sawmill in town, in 1736, by William Brattle of Cambridge, at the point where the reservoir dam now stands, the details have been given elsewhere. In 1737 Mr. Brattle sold one-fourth of the mill to Joseph Holden, in whose possession, and that of his son Abner, it remained for more than sixty years.

In 1744 Mr. Brattle, who was never a resident in the township, sold the remaining three-fourths of the mill, and the lot of 66 acres on which it was situated, to David Dunster, who had previously occupied lot No. 10 in what is now the central village. It is probable that Mr. Dunster erected a dwelling for himself and family close by the stream, a few rods below the old gristmill site, some indications of which are still to be seen. How long Mr. Dunster remained there is uncertain. But in 1749 he purchased lot 117, lying directly west, and, very likely, soon moved thither, since in 1751 Henry Stevens was occupying No. 112 as tenant for the time being, gaining full ownership of the same in May, 1758. Mr. Stevens died before the expiration of the year, and Elijah Gibbs, who settled his estate and subsequently married the widow, came into early possession of the property. Mr. Gibbs died in 1773.

The next owners, so far as can be ascertained, were William Edgell and Thomas Bemis, who, it is presumed, purchased of the administrator of Mr. Gibbs' estate. Edgell and Williams disposed of the lot in 1782 to Thomas Rand of Weston. Up to this date only the sawmill stood upon the stream, as in the time of William Brattle, one-fourth of which was still owned by Abner Holden. But the new purchaser, a housewright and a man of enterprise and thrift withal, soon began to make improvements in the way of utilizing the yet unemployed power below the existing dam. He put up





LUX Eng. Co., Boston Mass.

*FRANKLIN WYMAN.*





the gristmill a few rods down the stream, and still farther a fulling mill and clothier's shop. Near to the last, on the very borders of his lot, and deriving power from the same dam, he also built a blacksmith's shop, with a trip hammer attachment, for doing common blacksmithing and the manufacture of iron goods for the general market. Before the year 1792 he sold this last to Isaac Williams and Thomas Bemis, and with it the right to draw half the water from the pond directly above. In July of that year he disposed of the fulling mill and its appurtenances, with lands adjoining, to David Wyman of Jaffrey, N. H., and in December the rest of the property, including both the sawmill and gristmill, to Simeon Brooks of Ashburnham, and Ephraim Robbins for some years before a citizen of Westminster. The next year Mr. Robbins sold his share to Asa Farnsworth, who lived on the estate now owned by Samuel H. Sprague, and early in 1795 Mr. Brooks did the same. In 1799 Mr. Farnsworth bought the quarter of the sawmill previously owned by Abner Holden, which put him in possession of all of lot No. 112 and its belongings, except the fulling mill and trip hammer shop, with lands contiguous thereto.

It is to be presumed that Mr. Farnsworth built the carding mill which stood on the north side of the road opposite the sawmill, and which was run by water from the sawmill pond, though it may possibly have been erected by the next known owner, Eleazer Rider of Holden, in possession of the entire property in 1803, the date of whose purchase has not been learned. In May of that year Mr. Rider sold the saw- and gristmills, with the land on the north and west side of the road, excepting a small piece on which the carding mill was located, about thirty-seven acres, to Nathaniel G. Wood of Holden, and, two years later, the carding mill and its site, with twenty acres of land and a house on the south and east side of the road, to his son, Joseph Rider, who became a permanent resident in town, the father being but temporarily here.

It would seem that Mr. Wood built and occupied the original house standing on the site of the recent residence of George W. Merriam. That he lived there is certain, but no mention of a dwelling is made in the deed conveying the property to him. He sold, in 1811, all his possessions,—two mills, thirty-seven acres of land, a house and barn,—to Asa Moor of West Boylston, and Mr. Moor, five years afterward, disposed of the same to Thomas Miles, previously a hotel keeper on the turnpike below the Daniel Miles place. Mr. Miles mortgaged the property to Andrew Whitney of Princeton, and it was sold under foreclosure to Wonder Wears, from whom it passed to the ownership of Asa Farnsworth and by him was advertised for sale in the *Massachusetts Spy*, 1825. It reverted by purchase, or otherwise, to Mr. Wears, who disposed of the house, gristmill, and lands to Plympton Barnes in 1824, and whose executor, Dr. A. G. Parker, in 1841, sold the sawmill to Franklin Wyman, in whose possession it has since remained. Mr. Barnes sold the gristmill, etc., to Almon Derby and John Edgell in 1829, and Mr. Derby, who had bought out Edgell, to Franklin Wyman in 1836. David Wyman, Jr., bought it in 1840, from whom it passed to his brother Alfred, and thence back to Franklin in 1845. The same year it was bargained to Oliver Carter of Berlin, who run it for two years and then reconveyed it to Mr. Wyman.

The carding mill, bought by Joseph Rider in 1805, was disposed of by him to Joel Merriam in 1819, who sold to Asa Farnsworth, Jr., in 1826. From him it passed through the hands of Benjamin Wyman to his brothers, Franklin and David, the latter finally disposing of his interest to Franklin, giving him full possession of the same.

The trip hammer property when last noticed was in the hands of Isaac Williams and Thomas Bemis. Mr. Williams disposed of his share in 1792 to John Heywood of Gardner. After a few years it was sold to Mr. Bemis, who became thereby sole proprietor. After the death of Mr. Bemis his sons managed it for some time, but finally transferred it in 1814 to David Wyman, who, after letting it to Joseph Dale and others, at length removed the buildings and incorporated the land with his fulling mill property.



It has been stated that David Wyman purchased the fulling mill and lands adjoining in 1792. Shortly after, he disposed of one-half of his interest to Elisha Hall, with whom he was associated in business for a brief period, when he regained possession of the whole, which he retained through life. After his decease, in 1839, it passed at different intervals through the hands of his sons, David, Franklin, David and Alfred, and finally to the sole ownership of Franklin in 1845, at which date the latter secured by right of inheritance and purchase control of all the mill sites and water power located within the limits of lot 112.

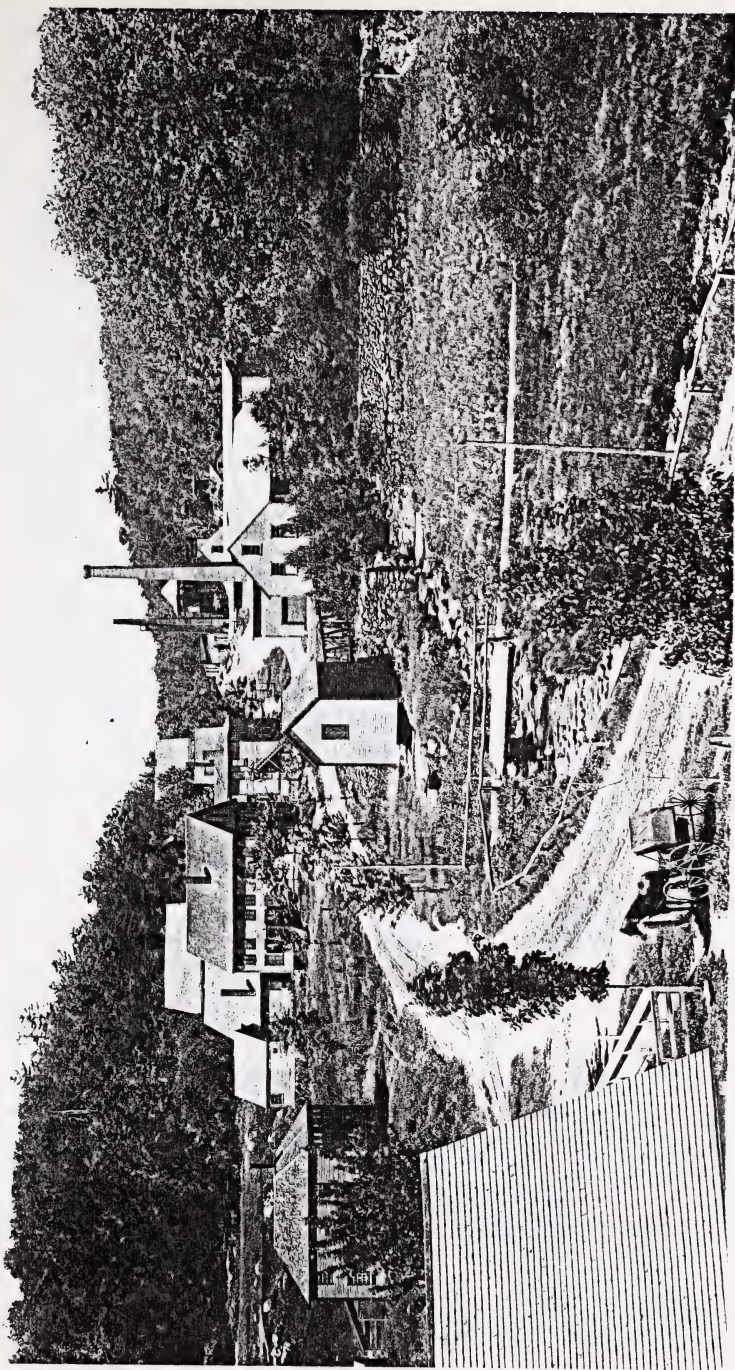
During the period of more than a hundred years covered by the occurrences thus far narrated, important changes had been going on below, upon territory included within the boundaries of lots No. 107 and 108. It is an interesting fact that the men who drew these lots in the first division of the lands of the township deemed them so undesirable as homesteads, that they declined taking them, choosing instead a location on the northeasterly slope of Bean Porridge Hill, afterward the Jonathan Sawyer estate, now owned by Mr. Porter F. Page. For that reason the two lots under notice became the common property of the proprietors, remaining undisposed of till after the incorporation of the district of Westminster, when they were sold to Dea. Joseph Miller. Soon after, the owner erected a sawmill a few rods above the site of the more recent mill of Mr. Benjamin Wyman. In 1778 Mr. Miller sold the westerly part of this undivided tract of land, one quarter of the whole, to Edmund Barnard, who lived on lot No. 64, — the present Simeon L. Bolton place, — a man of character and enterprise, and one of the leading citizens of the town. Associating with himself his neighbor, Isaac Williams, and John Raymond, the company built somewhat extensive iron works for the manufacture of various implements of industry and articles of household use. The establishment was known by the name of "The Forge," and stood between the sites of the present paper mills, so near the line of lot No. 112 that the right of flowing to within a few feet of the fulling mill was purchased of the owner, Thomas Rand, a few years afterward. The following year Messrs. Barnard and Raymond sold their interest to Silas Beaman of Boylston, and in 1796 Mr. Williams disposed of his share to Ephraim Beaman, brother of Silas, the two carrying on business under the style of "E. & S. Beaman." In 1804 the property was conveyed to Enoch Leonard of Canton, who, with his son Phineas, continued in possession till 1812, when the latter, his father having deceased in 1808, sold to Nathan Corey of Harvard. Mr. Corey took down the iron works and erected just below a factory for the production of certain kinds of cotton goods. On the premises, too, was a potash shop, by whom built is not known, which Mr. Corey operated for a time in connection with his other manufacturing business. Not succeeding to his satisfaction, he, in 1818, disposed of the property to Nichols and Gorham of Oakham, who very soon sold to Thomas L. Parker of Cambridge, and he in turn to Joseph Edgarton of Shirley and Wonder Wears of Harvard.

Mr. Wears removed to town, bought out Mr. Edgarton, and commenced manufacturing by himself. He continued in the business but a few years, although he retained the ownership of the property till his death in 1838, meanwhile renting it to different parties for different purposes, as his convenience or interest seemed to dictate. In the settlement of the estate his executor, Doctor Parker of Shirley, sold this and contiguous portions of it to Franklin Wyman.

Recurring to the time when Dea. Joseph Miller sold the Forge property to Edmund Barnard, it appears that at the same date, Dec., 1778, he conveyed the other three-quarters of the land included in house lots Nos. 107 and 108, the eastern portion of them, to Asa Farnsworth of Harvard, who soon took possession, building the first dwelling on the premises at or near the site of the present residence of Samuel H. Sprague. On this tract of land, near its western boundary, was the sawmill built by Mr. Miller. Five years after, Mr. Farnsworth sold the mill with adjoining farm to Ephraim Robbins, who, in 1804, transferred an undivided half to his kinsman, Jonas







W. P. ALLEN, GARDNER, MASS.

## WYMAN PAPER MILLS AT WACHUSETTVILLE.





Robbins. In 1806 the mill was disposed of to Phineas Leonard, the owner of the adjoining Forge lot, and a part of the farm to Edward Battles of Stoughton. At an early day Mr. Battles sold to David Wyman, after whose death the property passed to his son David, who sold it to his brother Benjamin, whence a portion of it passed to Mr. Sprague, the present owner.

In 1831 Asa Farnsworth, Jr., who owned the southeast part of his father's original estate, which had been for some years in the possession of his uncle, Phineas Gates, and was therefore called the Gates place, sold the same to Benjamin Wyman, who soon after erected upon it a spacious dwelling house and accompanying outbuildings, which have been occupied by himself and family to this day. Upon Mr. Wyman's property was an available water privilege, a few rods below the Miller mill site, which he afterward utilized by the erection of a new mill for lumber producing purposes. This mill served the ends for which it was designed, and passed into desuetude many years ago.

It will be seen by the foregoing narrative that the entire water power of Wachusettville and the mill privileges connected therewith, excepting only the one last named, came into the possession of Franklin Wyman in or about the year 1845. Twenty years before, the lands at the outlet of Meetinghouse Pond had been purchased by David Wyman, Sen., and Wonder Wears, and therewith the control of the water supply derived from that source, and these also by various transfers had been added to and become a part of the property of which Mr. Wyman was now the sole proprietor, enhancing the value of the other portions very considerably.

The time had now come when some radical changes must be made with respect to the uses to which this great amount of power was to be applied. A sawmill was no longer needed at the head of the village where one had stood for more than a hundred years. The growth of woolen factories in the country at large, and the consequent decline of home production of cloth and other woolen goods had destroyed the business of the carding and fulling mills. Other kinds of business—coopering, chair making, the grinding of grain, etc.,—were declining in profitability on account of increasing competition, better facilities, or otherwise. These and other considerations suggested and demanded a new departure in the entire industrial economy of the neighborhood, the result of which was the establishment, at the date last named, of paper making as promising most satisfactory returns to the owner of the property and the greatest advantage to the community. Meeting with some unforeseen difficulties and delays for a time, the undertaking became at length firmly and permanently established, entering upon a remarkably prosperous career, the incidents and main features of which are presented under their appropriate head in the earlier pages of this chapter.

By this brief recital it will be seen how largely the water power of Wachusettville has contributed in the past to the industrial activity and prosperity of Westminster. What it will do in the future to the same end, the future only can reveal.

[NOTE.—Subsequent to the time of writing the foregoing chapter, arrangements were made by the parties concerned for the removal of the entire business of "Nichols Brothers," described on page 317, to Gardner, and the consequent transfer of the plant, with all its belongings, has been effected during the passage of these sheets through the press. Moreover, in the spring of the present year (1892) the city of Fitchburg, in carrying out its plan for increasing its public water supply from the Westminster and Wachusett ponds, pursuant to a recent special act of the Legislature, made a purchase of the mill property of Franklin Wyman—privileges, factories, dwellings, and all their appurtenances,—involving the early permanent suspension of the paper making industry at Wachusettville. These transactions reduce very considerably the mechanical facilities of the town and its attendant industrial prosperity, much to the regret of its people and all interested in its well-being in future years. It is to be earnestly hoped that some new enterprise may come in to fill the places thus made vacant, or otherwise supply the losses likely to accrue thereby.]



## CHAPTER XVII.

### ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS—PART THREE.

DISINTEGRATION AND RECONSTRUCTION—SEPARATE PARISHES—  
CONGREGATIONALIST—METHODIST—UNIVERSALIST—BAPTIST.

FOR three-quarters of a century after the settlement of Westminster the religious interests of the inhabitants were provided for and managed in accordance with established New England usages. The founding and maintenance of religious institutions was deemed a public concern, to be secured as were other objects closely related to the general welfare. The town built the meetinghouse and furnished means for the payment of all expenses incident to public religious instruction and worship. Moreover, but one form of faith prevailed nominally here—the faith of the Puritans, which was essentially Calvinistic, more or less rigidly interpreted and administered under independent forms of ecclesiastical polity.

Nevertheless, there were indications in certain directions, here as elsewhere, that this unity was not absolute and universal and was not destined to continue forever; nay, that important changes were impending and would at no distant day ripen to a legitimate consummation. The principles of religious liberty operating conjointly with the growing intelligence of the community, tended naturally to that final result. To this source are largely due the multiform sects and denominations existing in modern society and throughout the Christian world.

Westminster was not exempt from influences created by the considerations mentioned, nor from the effects they were calculated to produce. Tokens of their presence began to manifest themselves, indeed, before the close of the eighteenth century, as noted in a previous chapter. Isolated cases of divergence from the prevailing beliefs and of new ecclesiastical affiliations occurred at that early day, the forerunners of multitudes bound, sooner or later, to follow. In 1814 others appeared, increasing in number as time went on, of which the public were advised through certificates addressed to the town clerk, in form following, to wit:

"We certify that John Dupee of Westminster is a member of the Religious society in the Town of Dana called Universalist.

"Dated the 1st Day of April, 1814.

AARON JOHNSON. } Com."  
DAVID WHIPPLE. }





"This may certify that Samuel Marsh of Westminster is a member of the Religious society called Methodist in Ashburnham and pays to their support.

"Ashburnham, Dec. 19, 1814.

HENRY WILLARD. } Com."  
SIMON WILLARD. }

"I hereby certify that Samuel Cooper hath become a member of and united in religious worship with the first Baptist Society in Ashby and Fitchburg.

"Fitchburg Dec. 2, 1815.

GEORGE WOOD, Clerk."

Certificates of a similar character followed these in rapid succession, until, in some half a dozen years, the number had amounted, in the aggregate, to more than a hundred, representing as many persons who had formally joined some religious body distinct from that supported by the town, and who were thereby, according to law, exempt from public taxation for religious purposes. These seceders, as they may be termed, or portions of them, became in due time the respective nuclei of several churches and societies formed in subservience to the principles of spiritual or theological affinity, of which particulars will be given hereafter.

In order to meet the growing dissent and gratify the desire to hear other views of Christian truth discussed than those held and preached by Rev. Mr. Mann, an article was inserted in the warrant for a town meeting held April 7, 1817, "To see if the town will admit the inhabitants of the town into the Meetinghouse for Religious purposes, on any time which will not interfere with our regular standing order." Upon this article it was "voted to admit the Inhabitants into the Meetinghouse as specified."

This action was of a general nature, and had on the face of it a semblance of toleration and catholicity. But it was evidently not intended to lend any sanction or extend any hospitality to any form of heresy or give encouragement to those whose opinions were deemed hostile to the received standard of faith. For when a few months later, Nov. 24, 1817, the town was asked to "give the Universalist Society of Westminster [organized the previous year] liberty of supplying the Desk in the Meetinghouse with a preacher four Sabbaths in a year," it was voted not to grant the request. Nevertheless, at the next April meeting the town expressed itself "willing that the Rev. Cyrus Mann exchange with the Rev. Samuel Clarke of Princeton." This was about the time when the revolt against the sterner features of the prevailing creeds assumed in the State of Massachusetts the form of Socinianism, latterly known as Unitarianism, and when an exchange of pulpit civilities between the stricter Calvinists and those known to entertain the newly-acknowledged views was a question of great interest in many of the churches,—in some of them of great excitement, causing alien-



ation of feeling, open hostility, disruption of old ties, and in not a few instances secession and the founding of new churches and societies under radically different theological auspices and denominational terminologies. Mr. Clarke was of the new school, and that there existed in Westminster considerable sympathy with him in his position of protest against the old Calvinism, is shown by the vote of the town just mentioned, as in other ways soon to be specified.

At the same meeting, held April 6, 1818, a project, which was carried into execution twenty years later, was submitted for consideration, as expressed in the article, "to see if the town will remove the meetinghouse into the center of the town," upon which it was "voted not to remove the meeting house."

The opposition to the views and teaching of Mr. Mann adverted to increased, from year to year, resulting at length in the entire separation of church and town in matters of an ecclesiastical nature, and in the adoption of the voluntary system as applied to the maintenance of the various forms and activities of worship and work in the development and promotion of the Christian life. On the 5th of April, 1819, the town, in conformity to the custom which had prevailed for seventy years, "Voted and granted \$600 for the Rev. Cyrus Mann's fifth years' Sallery." When, a year later, April 3, 1820, the question of appropriating money for the payment of Mr. Mann's sixth year's salary came up, it was "voted to dismiss the article." This was the last time that the town in its corporate capacity was called upon for the support of the public institutions of religion. Before another year expired the adherents of the old form of faith had organized on an independent basis for the maintenance of their distinctive views, and the town ministry of Westminster had come to a perpetual end. The newly established association took the name of "The First Congregational *Society* of Westminster," which represented and provided for the more external business interests of that portion of the people holding still the doctrines of the fathers, while the body representing the inner spiritual life existing among them assumed the corresponding title of "The First Congregational *Church* of Westminster." Under those respective heads the history of the original religious movement, organized and established here, will be continued from the date when the change just noted took place to the present day.

To secure the end thus indicated, a historical sketch, furnished at the request of the editor of this work by the recent pastor of the church and society, Rev. Charles M. Palmer, is cheerfully submitted, with the exception of a few paragraphs relating to matters more fully detailed in preceding chapters. It is given substantially as it came from the pen of the writer.







W. P. ALLEN, GARDNER, MASS.

CHURCH OF THE FIRST PARISH.





## THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

As we recede from the early times, whether of a state, a town, or a church, the history of what transpired in them becomes increasingly interesting and valuable. Something more than an idle curiosity prompts the desire to know the genesis of things, in respect to the institutions of society and the types of human life which at any time have a place in the world. The story of the early struggles, the great hindrances, the heroic perseverance of any people, and of the motives impelling thereto, is always pleasing to appreciative and responsive souls.

The founding of this church was almost coeval with the settlement of the town. The Puritan order seemed to be : first, a rude dwelling, next a meetinghouse, though the people often worshiped for a time in private houses, then a schoolhouse, and other institutions of the higher civilization. Almost marvellous does it seem that two families should have set up public worship on the Sabbath, supporting preaching at a considerable expense almost from the beginning in 1737. And what is more wonderful, they had a decent meetinghouse dedicated two years afterward, in 1739, and a church organized and a minister ordained three years later, in 1742. There seems to have been but six or seven families in town up to this date. This little band in the forest, sixteen miles distant from any settlement, appears in marked contrast with not a few towns in modern days upon our western frontier. These, sometimes with a marvellous growth of one or two thousand settlers in a single year; support a dozen or more liquor saloons, and things of a like nature, but wait for the home missionary to come and gather a few sympathetic souls for worship, and possibly after a time for a church and Sunday school.

It makes a vast difference in both the early and later history of a community whether its pioneers are people of the highest religious earnestness, or are led by the love of gain and adventure. This town was fortunate in its first settlers. They were of good Puritan stock, and their moral qualities marked their subsequent career.

[Rev. Mr. Palmer here gives a brief outline of the pastorates of the first two ministers of the town, with some account of their personal qualities and characteristics, all of which is omitted for reasons already indicated. His sketch is resumed with the installation of the third minister of the town, Rev. Cyrus Mann.]

Rev. Cyrus Mann was ordained to his chosen work, and installed as pastor of the church Feb. 22, 1815, Rev. Mr. Rockwood of Westborough preaching the sermon. For fifty years an ordination had not occurred in town. This was, therefore, a novel, as well as most interesting, occasion, for which great preparation was made.



The young pastor came from one of the first and best families of his native place. Of good Puritan stock, and nurtured in the Calvinistic faith, he found in the duties of his newly assumed position his congenial work. In personal appearance he was above medium height, with square shoulders, black hair and eyes, with heavy, overhanging brows, and a dignified and reserved manner. Though not so easy of approach as many, he yet carried a warm heart, and could unbend in the familiar intercourse of domestic life. He commanded the thorough respect of all. The young, especially, stood greatly in awe of him, and seldom ventured upon any intimacy with their minister. They were wont to hear in those days, and heed too, the injunction: "Children should be seen, not heard."

The sermons of Mr. Mann were well-studied, doctrinal, pungent, and designed to awaken and convict. They penetrated the consciences of many, and there was a high state of religious interest during his entire ministry, and this culminated in at least seven powerful revivals, by which 459 persons were added to the church while he had charge of it.

Under such earnest pressure as his preaching and personal efforts produced, it is not strange that some spirits recoiled in strong antagonism to his presentation of their case backed by the word of God. Early in his ministry liberal doctrines, then prevalent in the eastern part of the state, were espoused by a number of his congregation, who went out and formed a church where milder views were held and preached, and impenitent sinners were made more comfortable.

Up to this time there had been but one house of worship in town, save that a small Methodist one had been erected in the north part in 1817. The Universalists erected a house of worship on the North Common, so-called, in 1820, and in 1827 the Baptists, residing mostly in the southeast part, after having held meetings for some time with increasing interest, formed a society, under the auspices of which a church edifice was built soon after at the foot of Meetinghouse Pond.

Naturally the good shepherd of the old church felt grieved that any sheep should wander off to another fold. To his view others were building on the foundations he had laid with toilsome care. But he abated not at all his earnestness and fearlessly denounced the judgments of God upon the impenitent. In spite of some infelicities of manner and voice, Mr. Mann was a powerful ambassador of God. His words, however, were spoken in sincerity, tenderness, and love. The hearer of his impressive prayers could never doubt that he walked with God and was in secret accord with his Master. Such preaching, accompanied by such devotion and zeal, will always be sifting in its nature and awaken the hostility of those who will not yield to its claims. Nevertheless, God honors it to the salvation of souls.





This pastor had the rare ability to put new converts to work, causing them to become active Christians rather than silent partners in the church. Timid boys and diffident men were led to pray and testify in public to an extent that would be pleasing in any body of believers at the present time. Family worship and household religious training were secured in an unusual degree.

He did much for the educational and reformatory interests of the town. To him, more than to any one else, may be attributed the building of the Academy, which did so much in its time for the young people of this and adjoining localities. As the head of its management for several years, he was not only able to make it conduce to the prosperity of his own church, but was privileged to employ it as a means of directing not a few young men to careers of usefulness in the ministry and elsewhere. One writer says:—"So influential was this Academy in promoting learning and religion in Worcester County, that if Mr. Mann had never done anything else he would deserve the lasting gratitude of the people of Westminster and the surrounding towns."

He was one of the earliest ministers in the state to espouse the cause of temperance and to work for its promotion, often giving lectures in aid of it at home and abroad, thereby rendering it substantial service. It was largely by his efforts that as early as 1828 this reform had numerous earnest adherents in town. Church members began to be disciplined for undue indulgence in the use of the intoxicating cup. A few years later fermented wine was discarded in the observance of the rite of the Lord's Supper, though after much discussion and strenuous opposition.

Soon after his settlement, Sabbath schools were established in the eastern part of the State, and being favorably impressed with their utility, Mr. Mann was instrumental, contrary to the feelings of many of his people, in having one started in connection with this church in 1818. From humble beginnings, and in spite of many hindrances, it has kept steadily on its way for nearly three-quarters of a century with an ever-widening sweep of influence, and is everywhere gratefully recognized as a power for good.

The cause of missions was warmly advocated by this pastor, and the monthly concert of prayer for the work was instituted during his ministry. As a result of the interest awakened in this behalf, several daughters of the church were induced to enter the foreign missionary field, among whom the name of Myra Wood shines resplendent.

The Ladies' Sewing Society was formed during the administration of Mr. Mann, and for fifty years has been rendering quiet but valuable service in its annual donations of money, clothing, or family supplies to needy missionary laborers in



various localities, as well as to the freed people of the South. At the same time it has not been neglectful of the poor and unfortunate near at hand, but made many a heart and home glad and grateful by its timely and generous benefactions.

Mr. Mann was one of the prime movers in the formation of the Worcester North Ministerial Association of which he was an influential and much respected member, and the efficient scribe for many years.

Near the close of his ministry the old meetinghouse on the hill was abandoned, giving place to the more modern, more conveniently located, and better arranged one which had been built in the village and made ready for occupancy, and which was dedicated with appropriate services Jan. 3, 1837, the pastor preaching the sermon from the text found in Haggai 2:9, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former."

[NOTE. For some years previous to the erection of this (the present) house of worship, efforts had been made by interested parties within the parish to have that body assume the responsibility of a similar enterprise, but the strong opposition developed among the members residing in the south, southeast, and east parts of the town defeated them all. At length some thirty persons, interested in the project and determined to have it carried into effect, formed a "Meetinghouse Company," which voted to build, pledging money for the purpose and choosing Edward Kendall, Esq., Col. Asa Bigelow, Joseph Whitney, Thomas Knower, and Thomas Damon a committee to execute their plans in this regard. After the structure was completed, the proprietors offered it to their fellow-members of the parish at cost. The offer was declined, when the owners proceeded to sell what slips they could, and then donated their remaining interest in the edifice to the society. The gift could not well be refused. Ed.]

Thus for twenty-six years this earnest and faithful ambassador for Christ was permitted to impress himself upon many lives, animating them with holy aspirations and giving them impulses heavenward. The generation nurtured under his ministerial care, for solidity and strength of character, and for tense moral fiber, would not suffer in comparison with any other of the town's history. The worker passed on, but the work remains imperishable.

Rev. Stephen S. Smith succeeded to the vacant pastorate a few months subsequent to the retirement of Mr. Mann. He had been trained to the printer's calling, but, like his predecessor, was turned, under the influence of powerful religious impressions, from his original purpose in this regard to the work of the ministry.

In the last years of the preceding pastorate several of the leading members of the church, together with a few recent converts, embraced what were known as "Perfection" views, which were at that period disturbing the harmony of many churches. The new pastor was thought to be friendly to those tenets, and yet some of the more zealous champions of them, feeling that





they must bear emphatic testimony against the church as anti-Christ, either withdrew from it or courted its discipline by their defiant attitude in maintaining their newly received opinions. In denying natural immortality and affirming the annihilation of the wicked, they rendered themselves specially obnoxious to many of their fellow-members of the same covenant of faith. Had they been less vehement in speech and action, and the church as tolerant of divergent views as at present, much bitter feeling would have been saved and devout people would have wrought together in peace and harmony for a common end.

Soon after the settlement of Mr. Smith, the "Millerite" doctrine made some converts in the congregation and some discord in the church. The temperance cause in its onward course claimed much attention and awakened much discussion. The same was true in regard to the anti-slavery reform, concerning which some intemperate zeal was at times displayed, though on the whole great good no doubt was done. Many persons, here as elsewhere, on account of the timid and hesitating policy of the American Board, transferred their sympathy and contributions to the American Missionary Association, whose action was more uncompromising and satisfactory. Under Mr. Garrison's influence a few repudiated the conservative church and came out from it because of its slow pace in the path of reform.

With so many great questions agitating and dividing the community, it is not strange that this pastorate was a somewhat stormy one. Nevertheless, Mr. Smith was instrumental in gathering a large number into church fellowship. Large congregations listened to his preaching from Sabbath to Sabbath, and his eight years' ministry may be regarded as exceptionally successful.

After various temporary supplies of the pulpit, Rev. Orlando H. White, having been duly called, was ordained Aug. 21, 1851, his wife's father, Rev. Dr. S. L. Pomeroy, preaching on the occasion. Doctor White, writing of his ministry in this place, says: "Those were years of intense excitement on the great questions of Slavery, Temperance, and the Oberlin Theology. The 'Fugitive Slave Law' was just beginning to be executed and this town was one of the stations of the 'underground railroad.'"

As under previous pastorates, the church during the incumbency of Mr. White received large accessions to its membership. Congregations of five or six hundred gladly waited on and sustained their young and eloquent pastor. After three years of successful labor he was dismissed to work in other and important fields of Christian service. He has filled prominent and influential positions in the Congregational body, both in this country and in England, since leaving here, and is, at the present writing, supplying the pulpit of the College Church in Middlebury, Vt.





For nearly two years after Mr. White left the place the church and society had no regularly settled pastor. But May 1, 1856, Rev. Marcus Ames, who, educated for missionary labor, had served as minister and physician for several years in Western Africa, and who, later, had been in charge of a church in Patterson, N. J., was installed. He was from his childhood of a most gentle and lovable spirit, and by his tact and kindness here easily won the hearts of his people and the regard of all who knew him. His three years' service was most satisfactory and profitable to the church and community. A good deal of religious interest prevailed, especially in the years 1857-8, and many additions were made to the number of Christian professors.

Rev. Brown Emerson was the immediate successor of Mr. Ames, having been installed June 7, 1859. He was a sound preacher and labored about three years with general acceptance, surrendering his charge in March, 1862. He afterward entered the ministry of a sister denomination—the Presbyterian—passing thence to his reward on high some two years since.

Rev. Milan H. Hitchcock, returning from two years' successful missionary service in Ceylon, supplied the desk for six months during the year 1862, and proving satisfactory was crowned with the honors and powers of the pastoral office on the 18th of December. His labors, continuing for five years, were marked by tireless energy, thorough consecration, and faithful pastoral care. Many were added to the church under his administration, and he gained a high place in the esteem of his people.

The next minister of this church and society was Rev. A. Judson Rich, who was inducted into the sacred office May 22, 1867. He labored three years with a good degree of acceptance. He displayed great energy in his work, and enlisted in everything that would seem to advance the well-being of the town. The Sabbath audiences increased perceptibly under his preaching. With more liberal views than many of his supporters, some of his utterances gave some umbrage and he withdrew from this field in the early part of 1870. He has since been in the fellowship of the Unitarian denomination and is now the esteemed pastor of a church at Fall River.

Rev. William H. Cutler assumed the duties of the vacant pastorate in due and proper ecclesiastical form Oct. 3d of the year just named. During his ministry, which continued about two years, there was an extensive work of grace carried on under the leadership of the Evangelist, Henry F. Durant, who, by his powerful appeals to the reason and conscience, induced a large number to enter the Christian life. Among these were several persons of mature years not previously in sympathy with evangelical sentiments. After leaving his charge in this place, Mr. Cutler took orders in the Episcopal Church and is



now in active service as a minister of the form of faith and ecclesiastical polity which that body represents.

For nearly two years subsequent to the close of the last pastorate, the duties of the ministerial office were discharged by different clergymen acting as temporary supply, of whom Rev. B. F. Parsons of Derry, N. H., was the one chiefly employed.

Rev. Charles E. Coolidge assumed pastoral charge of the church and society in August, 1874. Fresh from his studies and full of the enthusiasm of early manhood, he at once won a place in the hearts of the people and entered upon a prosperous ministry of eight years' continuance. By his genuine interest in the young he gained great and salutary influence over them, leading many of them to Christ and helping them to a higher life. He left in November, 1882, to the deep regret of all who had been privileged to know him.

The successor of Mr. Coolidge was Rev. Charles M. Palmer, the present incumbent, who entered upon his labors March 18, 1883. He has found a church and congregation which, though decimated by death and removal, are much after the spirit and traditions of their fathers, showing the home and church influence of the past in many families, and auguring well for the cause of virtue and piety in this community in coming generations.

In completing this brief sketch one is impelled to inquire who can estimate the influence of this church in the almost one hundred and fifty years of its existence. It has brightened and purified homes and shaped many lives to high ideals by the secret power of its Sabbath services, Sunday school instruction, social meetings, and bands of workers in various lines of benevolence and helpfulness. Strange and unnatural is it that any well-wisher of society, or lover of his kindred and family, could withdraw himself and those dependent upon him from its varied educative and uplifting ministrations. Most powerfully has it aided in developing that type of personal character which has given pre-eminence and honor to New England life and history. Instead of throwing down the ladder by which the present has risen to its acknowledged high state of civilization, let us, pressing forward still along the same path of progress, encouraged by the successes and warned by the mistakes and imperfections of the past, prove worthy of our place and inheritance. [C. M. P. written in 1890.]

#### THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL SOCIETY.

The preaching of the principles and general ideas of the religious life represented by the Methodist denomination first took place in the northern part of Worcester County, in the year 1793. Rev. John Hill, an accredited minister of that form of faith, came to Ashburnham from some one of the towns near Boston, and commenced holding services there, which re-





sulted in the formation of a society early in 1794. A few persons in the northerly part of this town became interested in the meetings of the Ashburnham society, and possibly had services from time to time in their own homes.

The first one of these to formally connect himself with this movement, so far as can be learned, was Luther Barrell, a young man about nineteen years of age, who joined the church in 1811, and who remained faithful to his early vows through life, becoming an active promoter of the faith he had espoused, a lay preacher of good repute, and a worthy representative of the gospel of Christ. In the latter part of 1814 three taxpaying residents of Westminster, Samuel Marsh, William Barrell, and Silas Smith, filed certificates with the town clerk, testifying to their membership in the Methodist society of Ashburnham, as a ground of exemption from the payment of the regular ministerial tax. Before the 28th of the following March, a Methodist society had been formed in Westminster, of which Luther Barrell, who had previously resided for a time in Ashburnham, was a certified member. The records of the town clerk show that the following persons, in addition to those already named, withdrew from the support of the town ministry and joined this new movement during the six or seven years subsequent to its organization: Samuel Marsh, Jr., Stephen Puffer, Elisha Tottingham, James Puffer, Joshua Burgess, Abigail Barrell, Joseph Mudge, Jr., Joseph G. Whitney, James Sawin, and Oliver Sampson who had recently moved into the place from Ashburnham, where he had been an active and influential member of the church. The Westminster society, though composed chiefly of inhabitants of the north part of the town, had members belonging to adjacent portions of neighboring towns, making it respectable in size, as it was in ecclesiastical standing, among the churches with which it was in fellowship.

In the year 1817 a house of worship was erected and formally dedicated to God and to the uses for which it was designed. It was located on the left hand side of the road leading to South Ashburnham, a few rods west of the former Luther Barrell place, now owned by Frederick W. Smith. It was a small structure, measuring only 30 feet in length and 24 in width. The outside was whitewashed, to give it a comely appearance, but the inside was void of any coloring, being finished in the natural wood. The pulpit was of the simplest form, and wholly unadorned; the seats were plain benches, with no pretence of beauty or good taste. The whole constituted a typical Methodist meetinghouse of the primitive pattern. No doubt it had within its walls, upon the Sabbath, as devout, as sincere, as acceptable worshipers as gather in the more stately and ornate churches of that faith of the present day.

The Methodist society continued for about seventeen years, or until 1832, when it disbanded, the then existing members





UNIVERSALIST CHURCH.





uniting with the society in Ashburnham, which had increased considerably in numbers and importance, and which was exhibiting the prophetic indications of that life and prosperity which have since characterized it. There they could have better privileges of worship and religious edification for themselves and their families than had been previously enjoyed, or was practicable under a separate organization, and there they could labor more effectively for the cause of Christ and for the distinctive principles and church polity in which they believed, and which they wished to see diffused and extended as far and wide as was possible among men. Their house of worship was sold, the proceeds going to aid in the erection of a new church edifice in Ashburnham, under the auspices of the society there, with which the interests of whatever Methodists have remained in Westminster have been to this day identified.

It does not appear from existing records and authorities, so far as found, that the society under notice ever had any regular and permanent minister of its own—a resident citizen of the place, although Rev. Stephen Cushing, in his discourse delivered on the fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of the Ashburnham church, July 9, 1882, states that a parsonage was bought in 1819. It seems probable that the pulpit was supplied from time to time, as opportunity allowed, by circuit preachers and itinerant clergymen, the vacant Sabbaths being occupied by local talent in the form of lay preaching and exhortation, of which there was no lack.

#### THE UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY AND CHURCH.

There are no data known to exist by which it can be ascertained when or by whom the doctrine of the final salvation of all souls was first preached in Westminster. The earliest authentic record going to show that there were any adherents of the doctrine here has already been spoken of, and is to be found in the clerk's book, No. 4, page 415. It bears date April 1, 1814, as stated, and certifies that John Dupee has joined the Universalist society in Dana. In April, 1816, Merari Spaulding is declared by the proper officers to have become a member of the Universalist society in Shirley. The following year an organization of those who had espoused that form of faith was effected, the persons whose names are herewith given lodging certificates to that effect with the clerk, to wit: Zebina Spaulding, Daniel Lincoln, Charles Smith, Daniel Lincoln, Jr., Joshua Moore, Heman Ray, Samuel Gates, Jonathan Whitman, and Caleb Wetherbee. Charles Smith, Jonathan Whitman, and Hayman Wheeler were chosen parish committee for the year. In 1818 the new organization had augmented its numbers by the addition of Jesse Spaulding, Silas Smith, Jr., Samuel Foster, Aaron Monroe, Levi Graves, Joel Baker, Cyrus Winship, Jonas Ward, Moses Mosman, Daniel





Sawin, Joseph Howard, Isaac Blodgett, Caleb Lincoln, Nathaniel Blodgett, Elias Blodgett, Henry Coolidge, Charles Coolidge, and Merari Spaulding, Jr. There also joined it, as shown by the proper vouchers, in 1819, John G. Hadley, Joseph Beaman, Jr., Jonas Winship, Jr., Joseph Polley, Stillman Brooks, John Mosman, Elizabeth Holden, Amos Sawyer, Benjamin Seaver, Aaron Taylor, Asa W. Rand; in 1820, Sidney Smith, Amos Sawyer, Jr., Wonder Wears, Levi Holden, Elias Holden, John Miller, Abner Holden, Elisha Hall, Asa Ray; in 1821, Farwell Cowee, Nathan Raymond, Pearson Cowee, Manasseh S. Forbush, Samuel Mosman, Jr., Joseph Beaman, Amos Ray, Asa Brooks, and Lucy Brooks; in 1822, Henry Connery, Cummings Hadley, Asa Wheeler, John Winship, Betsey Wheeler, Mary Ray, Nathaniel Wheeler, Abel Woodward, Benjamin Lewis, Walter Spaulding, Joseph Darby, Nathan Corey, Benjamin Davis, Samuel Miller, and Joseph Howard, Jr. The whole number thus appearing to have formally withdrawn from the support of the old church, and to have united with the Universalists, was seventy-four, not including the wives of any of those named, who may or may not have sympathized with their husbands in the change made. The women whose names are in the list were taxpayers, and as such indicated their preferences in this regard.

It is not to be presumed that all the persons mentioned above had any definite positive convictions in respect to the doctrines represented by the Universalist denomination, and that they all intelligently and conscientiously espoused them. It is more probable that the action of many of them was of the nature of a revolt, on moral, rational, or sentimental grounds—possibly on grounds of religious prejudice—against the harsher features of the old Calvinism, which constituted the acknowledged basis of the existing town church; or it may be against the preaching of the recently settled minister, Rev. Mr. Mann, who, as stated by Mr. Palmer (page 336), proclaimed and defended those features in his sermons, with special emphasis and with marked directness of application. Moreover, it is quite likely that the simple idea of the final salvation of all men may have had a charm for unregenerate, as well as regenerate, ears and minds, and so attracted for the time being persons of little or no interest in, or care for, religious concerns of any kind or name, as matters of belief, as motives to virtue and piety, or as guides and helps to the right ordering of heart and life. These suppositions are warranted not only by the nature of the case, but by the fact that in the more permanent readjustment of things, a considerable number of those who, at the outset, called themselves Universalists, did not retain their connection for any great length of time with the society bearing that name, but fell out of all religious or ecclesiastical associations whatsoever.

Nevertheless, it is to be remembered that among these early professed believers in Universalism, there were persons of high



character, of well-defined and well-settled convictions, of clear intellect and sound judgment — persons who held their newly avowed opinions in a good understanding, and who could, when occasion required, “give a reason for the hope that was in them,” both on rational and on scriptural grounds, to the confounding and silencing, if not to the conviction, of those with whom they had argument. Of these was Elias Holden, grandson of Dea. Joseph Holden, a man of strong mind and of great power of reasoning which he loved to exercise, who knew the Bible from beginning to end as few in town did, and who was able to defend his faith in the finally all-conquering grace of God, against all opposers with singular efficiency and skill. Moreover, it may be said that some of the letters resigning membership in the church of the fathers and embodying reasons for the change of ecclesiastical relations, were notable specimens of polemic ability and theological discussion, worthy a place in the exegetical and controversial religious literature of that period. To this class belonged the one written by Cyrus Winship, a copy of which has been preserved. It evinces an intelligent comprehension of the points of doctrine involved, a wide acquaintance with the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, a vigorous and logical mind, and a reverent spirit withal, worthy of the cause in behalf of which he writes.

Under such auspices as are thus indicated was the Universalist Society of Westminster founded. The subjoined sketch of its history is derived largely from the full, well-kept, and carefully preserved records of its different clerks, supplemented by personal observation, memoranda, and reminiscence.

Mention has already been made of the fact that an association representing a liberal form of Christian faith was formed in the year 1817. Three years later the movement secured official recognition and legal standing before the public by special action of the Legislature of the State as the following document, copied from its records, witnesseth :

#### “AN ACT

#### TO INCORPORATE THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY IN WESTMINSTER.

“Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled and by the authority of the same, That Heman Ray, Caleb Witherbee, Joshua Moore, Henry Coolidge, Jesse Spaulding, Caleb Lincoln, Daniel Lincoln, Elias Blodgett, Isaac Blodgett, Jonas Winship, Jonas Holden, Jonas Winship, Jr., Silas Smith, Jr., Merari Spaulding, Cyrus Winship, Joseph Howard, Asa W. Rand, Zachariah Whitman, Charles Smith, Jonathan Whitman, Joseph Beaman, Jr., Moses Mosman, Benjamin Seaver, Zebina Spaulding, Caleb Wilder, John Mosman, Stillman Brooks, Joel Baker, Abner Holden, Levi Sawyer, and Jacob Sawyer, with their families, polls, and estates, together with such others as may hereafter associate with them, and their successors, be and they are hereby incorporated into a religious society by the name of The First Universalist Society in Westminster, with all the privileges powers rights and immunities to which other Parishes are entitled by the Constitution of this Commonwealth.





"Art. 3. Be it further enacted that either of the Justices of the Peace for the County of Worcester, upon application therefor, is authorized to issue his warrant directed to some member of said Society requiring him to warn the members thereof to meet at such time and place as shall be appointed in said warrant, to choose such officers as Parishes are by law empowered, and required to choose at their annual meetings.

"Approved. JOHN BROOKS, Gov.

"Feb. 7, 1820."

Pursuant to the provisions of this enactment, a meeting of the newly incorporated body was called by Hayman Wheeler, Esq., on the 25th of the following April, when Merari Spaulding was elected clerk and treasurer, and Hayman Wheeler, Cyrus Winship, and Asa W. Rand were chosen assessors for the year ensuing. The assessors were constituted a committee for the supply of preaching and seventy dollars were appropriated to pay for the same and defray other expenses.

Action had previously been taken with reference to the erection of a house of worship, and the work of preparation therefor was already going on. To obtain the requisite funds for the undertaking, the pews were mostly sold in advance, on condition that half the purchase money was to be paid when the building was enclosed and the balance when it was ready for occupancy. The house was completed the following year, and was dedicated with appropriate services on the 3d of July, Rev. Edward Turner of Charlestown preaching from the words "All nations whom thou has made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name." — Psalms 86:9. It was a well-proportioned, neat, two-story structure, with frontal projection and steeple, and had seating accommodations for some four or five hundred persons. It stood at the rear of the North Common, a mile and a half from the Center, most of the families worshiping in it residing in that part of the town and in contiguous neighborhoods in other towns. Its position was commanding and its outlook pleasant in all directions, though there were but few dwellings in its immediate vicinity.

Religious services had undoubtedly been held in private residences before and during the erection of the meetinghouse, conducted by clergymen temporarily engaged from abroad for that purpose, but as soon as a place of public worship was provided, the desirableness and importance of having a permanent and regular supply of the pulpit was recognized and steps were taken to secure that end. Hence on the 29th of January, 1822, after voting and granting "one hundred and sixty dollars to hire preaching the present year," the society instructed the committee having the matter in charge "to apply to Bro. Levi Briggs to supply the pulpit." Mr. Briggs responded favorably to the application and, his services proving acceptable, he was after a few months induced to assume the duties of a settled minister, his installation taking place Sept. 3, 1822, the sermon



on the occasion being delivered by Rev. Paul Dean of Boston. A few weeks before, June 15th, a church was formally established, the first deacons of which were Merari Spaulding and Joel Baker.

The pastorate of Mr. Briggs was brief, continuing less than two years, and without noteworthy incident.

The second pastor of the Universalist Church and society was Rev. Charles Hudson, who, after the usual preliminaries, assumed the duties of the office in April, 1824. Of strong and vigorous intellect and thoroughly devoted to the faith that was then everywhere spoken against, he entered upon and prosecuted his work with earnestness and zeal. In a few years he built up a large, strong society, among whose members and constituency were found some of the most trustworthy, substantial, and influential people of the town—men of principle and honor, women of thoughtful, reverent spirit, exemplary and respected in all the walks of life.

To meet and bear testimony against one of the popular excesses of the time, the growing tendency to needless expenditure and display on funeral occasions and matters relating thereto, the society, in a spirit worthy of emulation at the present day, at its annual meeting, March, 1830, voted

"1. To dispense with giving ardent spirits to all unnecessary attendants.

"2. To dispense with inviting pall-bearers back to the house of the deceased for refreshments.

"3. To dispense with wearing any more badges of mourning than a black ribbon on the arm, or a weed on the hat of the male, and a black ribbon around the bonnet or cap of the female."

As time went on and the influence of Mr. Hudson increased, resulting in a greater extension of Universalist views among the inhabitants of the southerly and easterly parts of the town, it became apparent that the location of the house of worship was not favorable to the best interests of the society. Accordingly, early in the year 1833 a movement was inaugurated looking to its removal to a more central situation, in which the great body of those at that time interested could be better accommodated. Upon bringing the matter before the society at the annual meeting in April, it was voted "that the Society give their consent that the meeting-house be moved to the Town Street or to some suitable place near the street, provided it is done free of expense to the Society and put in as good repair as it is now in, and that the rights of pew-holders shall not be infringed upon."

Pursuant to this action the building was transferred during the summer following to the position which it now occupies, at an expense of about twelve hundred dollars, and services were resumed in it in the autumn of the same year. Externally the structure is essentially the same as when first erected,



although important changes and renovations have been made inside at several different dates, as necessity and convenience have seemed to justify or require.

At the outset and for some years it was the policy of the society to make an engagement with the minister annually, but in the month of December, 1835, this plan was changed and Mr. Hudson was engaged for five years at a salary of four hundred and fifty dollars a year, each year to have fifty Sabbaths' preaching, the term of service to begin with the following April and to end with April, 1841.

In the autumn previous to the expiration of this period, Mr. Hudson, who had for some years been interested in political affairs, and who had been called by his fellow-citizens of the town and county to serve in both houses of the State Legislature, was elected to a seat in the National House of Representatives, rendering it impossible for him to continue much longer in the work of the Christian ministry, and his pastorate came to an end accordingly. Passing thus from the religious to the political arena, in which he rendered distinguished service, Mr. Hudson never returned to the pulpit again. Later in life, after leaving Westminster in 1849 and taking up his residence in Lexington, he entered into the fellowship of the Unitarian denomination, of which he was a respected, active, and influential member till his death, which occurred May 4, 1881, at the age of 85.

As a part of the religious history of his time, it is proper to remark that Mr. Hudson belonged to what was called the Restorationist branch of the Universalist denomination, holding and defending the doctrine of *future* punishment in opposition to the theory, then largely prevailing, that sin and all its consequences are confined to the present state of being. In the conflict which arose between the champions of these two schools of thought, he vindicated himself and his views before his own people and the community at large with marked ability, both in public addresses and by the printed page. The position of Mr. Hudson upon the subject in controversy is justified by the fact that the Universalists of to-day, with rare exceptions, accept and maintain, substantially, the theories for which he "both labored and suffered reproach."

As the time drew near when he was to enter upon his duties at the national capital, it became necessary to make provision for filling the vacancy in the pulpit to be occasioned thereby, and the society voted "to hire the Rev. Paul Dean for a few Sabbaths." As a result of this vote, Mr. Dean proved so acceptable in all respects to the people that he became their acting, resident pastor for about three years, rendering excellent service and imparting new vigor to the different departments of the work under his charge.

Mr. Dean at this time was a man somewhat past middle life;





tall, erect, dignified, with a cheerful countenance, of pleasing address and gentlemanly manners. He came from Boston, where he had been settled for about twenty-five years, his ministry there beginning in 1813 as colleague of the celebrated John Murray, the reputed founder of Universalism in this country, and where he had acquired wide-spread fame as one of the first pulpit orators of his day and generation. His gifts in this particular had by no means left him when he entered upon his pastorate here, though advancing years and somewhat infirm health had impaired in a measure the richness of his voice, the elegance of his diction, the persuasive power of his utterance, the magnetic charm of his personal presence. He attracted large audiences and won the respect and confidence of the public during his brief stay in town, which terminated in 1844.

It was under his ministry that the first Christmas celebration ever held in Westminster took place, in the year 1842. It was an interesting and memorable occasion. The house was profusely decorated. Appropriate scripture passages were displayed upon the walls, a large choir rendered inspiring, commemorative anthems, and the pastor, animated with the spirit of reverence and love for him whose birth into the world was an event deemed worthy of remembrance and honor, preached one of his most ornate and classic sermons with unusual eloquence and power. Few who were present at the time will ever forget the attractiveness of the house, or the fervor, grandeur, impressiveness which characterized the service. Its very novelty gave the occasion charm and sanctified power.

The successor of Mr. Dean was Rev. Edward Turner, one of the earliest champions in this state of the doctrine of God's impartial and all-conquering grace, having grown old in the ministry of universal reconciliation and the final blessedness of all men. Of gentle spirit, yet earnest and faithful, he preached, not more by his power of speech and regular pulpit efforts than by his daily, constant life, the "glad tidings of great joy." His presence was a benediction, and his influence was salutary and helpful to all who were permitted to come under it. He taught emphatically

"The Gospel of the Golden Rule,  
The New Commandment given to men;  
Thinking the deed and not the creed  
Would help us in our utmost need."

On the 3d of March, 1846, a vote of the society was passed, instructing the committee on pulpit supply to employ for the ensuing year the Rev. Varnum Lincoln, who had been preaching for several months to the almost universal satisfaction. This was accordingly done, and he entered at once upon the duties to which he was invited, performing them with conscientious fidelity and consecrated zeal. He held the pastorate about three



years, serving not only his own church and congregation as a good minister of the universal grace of God, but the town and community in various ways, especially as a champion of the temperance cause and as a member of the school committee—a position for which his scholarly tastes, love of children, and other excellent qualities eminently fitted him.

After an interregnum of some two years, during which the desk was supplied by Rev. Lyman Maynard and other casual preachers, Rev. Quincy Whitney became the resident minister of the parish and church. He had many personal friends in town, having been born in the south part of Ashburnham, and having spent several terms at the Academy some years before, which gave him a prestige enjoyed by none of his predecessors. When he entered upon his labors here he was in the prime of life, and took up the work he found to do with a full heart, carrying it forward with energy and persevering zeal. Of scholarly attainments and good address, with more than average oratorical power and skill, he awakened fresh interest in the church and its officers, renewing the prosperity of former days. Under his administration somewhat extensive improvements were made in the house of worship, and considerable increase of attendance was secured. Strongly denominational in his convictions and tastes, his preaching was designed and calculated to reach and influence his hearers for good, chiefly through the proclamation and exaltation of the doctrines and ideas distinctively characteristic of the Universalist communion.

The successor of Mr. Whitney was Rev. D. C. O'Daniels, who entered upon his labors early in 1854, and continued them for two years with varying degrees of efficiency and success. His inconstant health was a source of anxiety to himself and his friends, and of course a hindrance to him in whatever he sought to accomplish; both in his preparation for his pulpit efforts and in every department of parish and church activity. Moreover, his extremely radical views upon many of the great questions of religious inquiry, which were in striking contrast to those of his predecessor, awakened some opposition among his people, and tended to disintegrate rather than combine and unitize the forces and material with which he had to do. Nevertheless, the sincerity of Mr. O'Daniels' purpose, the originality of his thought, the earnestness of his manner, and withal the sweetness, tenderness, and devoutness of his spirit and the genuineness of his character, enabled him to win his way to many hearts, and gave him a power of influence over the souls of men, not easily estimated, but none the less real, salutary, and abiding. Out of him virtue went to quicken, to save, and to bless.

Since the closing of Mr. O'Daniels' pastorate this church and society has experienced varied fortunes, only the more marked features of which can be indicated. The general decline which





has taken place in all the hill towns of New England during that period has had much to do in the way of hindering its prosperity, while the vicissitudes of business life have had their elevating or depressing effect upon its career.

It seems to have fallen into a state of suspended animation for three or four years subsequent to the time indicated. There was, so far as learned, no regular supply of the pulpit, and only occasional religious services were held until about 1859, when Rev. Jacob Baker, a state missionary of the Universalist denomination, undertook the task of reviving its slumbering energies, and of setting in motion once more the multiform activities so long dormant and unemployed. Such a complete renewal of life was effected, and such courage and faith on the part of the people prevailed, that in 1866 Mr. E. W. Whitney, a young man fresh from his studies, was duly called, ordained, and installed in the long vacant pastorate, taking up his abode in town, and becoming a settled minister in the midst of those he had engaged to serve. Mr. Whitney had rare gifts in some respects, and labored diligently and with gratifying success. But his ministry continued for only a year, when he left for other fields of Christian usefulness.

The next pastor was Rev. George Procter, who, though quiet and unassuming in his spirit and manner, was yet a faithful, devoted servant of his people and of the Master in whom he believed. His labors were well calculated to promote the higher interests of the church, and to advance in the world that Kingdom of God which is "righteousness and peace and joy."

The successor of Mr. Procter was Rev. S. L. Beal, who was ordained to the work of the ministry and installed as pastor in the autumn of 1870. Much interest was awakened by Mr. Beal's labors, and a good degree of prosperity attended his administration of church affairs. He was an earnest worker both in the pulpit and outside, took an active part in causes of philanthropy and reform, and was ready to help whatever seemed calculated to improve human conditions or enhance the public order and welfare.

With the retirement of Mr. Beal came a decline of interest and activity in the society, ultimating in an almost entire suspension for a time of its functions and forces. Relief from this state of inaction and consequent discouragement was, however, obtained through the instrumentality of Rev. Royal T. Sawyer, minister of a sister church in Gardner, who was quite willing, for such compensation as could be readily paid, to conduct public religious services on Sunday afternoons, and assume a semi-pastoral relation to the people in other respects. A satisfactory arrangement of that nature was made in the fall of 1875, which continued till he gave up his Gardner position two years later.

Subsequent to that date there was again an interregnum of pastoral relations and duties, occasional meetings only being



held, when the minister at Gardner or some itinerant or otherwise unemployed clergymen could be present, but upon the accession of Rev. James Taylor to the charge of the church and society in Gardner in 1884, an arrangement similar to that previously existing was entered into with him, much to the satisfaction and profit of all those connected therewith. The like measure was adopted when Rev. H. W. Smith succeeded Mr. Taylor, and is still in force under Rev. Mr. Felt, the present Gardner pastor. Under it a fair degree of prosperity seems to be enjoyed. The essential interests of the church are provided for, its usual activities are in operation, and the faith of Christian Universalism is duly honored and promoted.

It is proper to note specially the fact of which there are several intimations in what has gone before, that a Sabbath school was organized soon after the society itself was established, and duly equipped for its own appropriate work. It has continued with occasional interruptions to the present day. In its own quiet way, with little outward demonstration, sometimes under great discouragements, it has gone on through all these years, teaching its lessons of God's impartial and all-conquering love and grace, of Christ's exalted mission as the Savior of all men, and of the final universal holiness and bliss, and training the children and youth attending it in the principles and spirit of virtue and godliness to all the excellences and graces of the Christian life. It has been an important department of the service rendered by this church and society to the cause of a liberal, rational faith, of good morals, of true piety in the community and world.

#### **THE BAPTIST SOCIETY AND CHURCH.**

It has been stated in a preceeding chapter that an interest in the principles and methods of the Baptist denomination arose in town as early as the year 1784, when Josiah Wheeler and John Martin had their regular ministerial tax abated by the assessors, on the ground of such interest and of the pecuniary support given by them to a religious body with which they were in sympathy in that respect. Also that twelve years later the town voted to exempt them from the same tax, on condition that they presented to the town clerk a paper signed by an accredited teacher of the views professedly held by them, certifying to their attendance upon his ministry with corresponding contributions to the maintenance of the same. Mention has furthermore been made of the fact that in 1816 Jedediah Cooper furnished the clerk a similar certificate in regard to himself. Following him were twenty-four others, who, during the next five years, were certified to as members in good standing of a Baptist society. Their names are as follows: Solomon Laws, Samuel Martin, Samuel Cooper, Flint McIntire, Abijah Lewis, Marcus Cutter, John Goodale, John Hadley, Jonathan Smith,







W. P. ALLEN, GARDNER, MASS.

BAPTIST CHURCH.





Jonas Smith, Josiah Wheeler, Lewis Wheeler, Hayman Wheeler, Jonas Winship, Aaron Bolton, Benjamin Lynde, Silas Ward, Jonas Holden, Caleb Wilder, Jacob Sawyer, Levi Sawyer, Daniel Foskett, Asahel R. Seaver, Simon Foskett. Of this number the last three had united with the society in Princeton, which was organized in 1817; the others with the society of Ashby and Fitchburg, the date of whose founding is not known. The latter belonged for the most part in the extreme north part of the town. Few if any of these identified themselves with the Baptist society which was permanently established in town at a later day, while the large majority of them, when the "voluntary system" was adopted, gave up their connection with the society of Ashby and Fitchburg, and either joined one of the two other bodies organized under that system, or dropped out of all religious affiliations of whatsoever faith or name. The three persons mentioned as having united with the Princeton society became active and lifelong members of the Westminster movement, a detailed historical sketch of which prepared by the present pastor, Rev. Lyman Partridge, and approved by the church is, in a somewhat condensed form, herewith presented.

Material for a full and correct history of the Baptist society and church in Westminster is abundant, the records having been kept with thoughtful precision from the beginning, and carefully preserved. In the early part of the present century the Rev. Elisha Andrews, pastor of the Baptist church in Templeton, a man of strong intellect and the author of several works upon theological subjects, one of whose grandsons was Governor and also Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Connecticut, while another is now president of Brown University, held religious services occasionally at the houses of persons of the Baptist faith in the easterly part of the town, at which much interest was awakened, resulting in a goodly number of conversions. The first person baptized by him in town was Daniel Foskett, who was followed soon after by Nathaniel Tottingham, and these two men, together with John Estabrook, a member of the old church, established the first prayer meeting ever held in the place, in the year 1806.

In 1817 a Baptist society was formed in Princeton, antecedent to the organization of a church in 1822, a considerable number of the members of each of which resided in Westminster. The pastor, Rev. Elias Johnson, frequently preached in the schoolhouse of the former District No. 7, and his labors were blessed in the salvation of souls to such an extent that on the 19th of March, 1827, a society was instituted here, and three years later a church, composed of thirty persons, fourteen brethren and sixteen sisters, dismissed from the Princeton membership for that purpose. At the public recognition of the new church, held in the schoolhouse just named, Rev. Elisha Andrews was mod-



erator and Rev. Asaph Merriam, a native of the town, was clerk of the council, the sermon being preached by Rev. Abial Fisher of West Boylston. At the first meeting of the members, held April 6, 1830, Joel Merriam was elected deacon and John Foskett clerk, a position held by him for fifty-three years and finally terminated by his death. The Lord's Supper was first administered April 18th and the ordinance of baptism June 13th, the Rev. Asaph Merriam officiating on both occasions. During the same year a meetinghouse was built at the foot of the pond, near the site of the first house erected in the place. It was a brick structure having a seating capacity of more than three hundred. The sale of the pews, added to the contributions of material and labor made by the members and their friends, enabled the young church to dedicate its house of worship free of debt. This event took place October 19th, at which time Appleton Morse was ordained and installed pastor of the two churches of Westminster and Princeton, Rev. Ira Chase of Newton Theological Institution delivering the sermon. The efforts of Mr. Morse, though not of long continuance, were, by God's favor, crowned with success, ten being received to church membership by baptism during his pastorate of seven months, which was divided between the two churches of which he had charge. May 8, 1831, he resigned his care of the Westminster church that he might devote himself exclusively to the one in Princeton and its branches in Fitchburg and Leominster.

Mr. Morse studied at Brown University and graduated at Newton in 1830. He was a man of rare consecration and fidelity, devoting himself earnestly to his pulpit work and making his pastoral calls occasions of religious counsel and prayer that he might win souls to Christ. His public ministry was crowned with a succession of revivals. It is an interesting fact that his last sermon was preached here in the desk where eight years before he had been ordained. He died in 1838 while pastor at Fitchburg, and was buried there in Laurel Hill cemetery.

In June, 1831, the church called Rev. Amasa Sanderson to its pastorate, which call was accepted "after much deliberation and prayer." The good work previously begun continued. During the following winter a movement at Groton, which he had been instrumental in inaugurating, had so far advanced that those interested in it were ready to organize a church and had invited him to assume its pastorate. "He believed it was his duty to go there," and asked to be released from his Westminster charge. His request was reluctantly granted and he soon removed to the new field of service. He was a good man and successful in his work. Ten were baptized during the few months he labored here.

From 1832 to 1835 the church and society had no settled minister, but the pulpit was supplied most of the time. Several students at the Newton Seminary spent their vacations





here. In 1833 Dea. Joel Merriam spoke Sabbath morning and was succeeded in the afternoon by his son Franklin, then a student at the Academy preparing for the ministry, whom the church had recently licensed to preach. The following year the latter, at the close of his freshman course in the theological school, occupied the desk six Sabbaths.

Meanwhile the church, anxious for a pastor and coveting if not the best at least the better gifts, extended a unanimous call to Rev. Abial Fisher, who had preached the sermon at the recognition of the church. But he declined the invitation. A similar honor was extended not long after to Rev. John Walker of Sutton, who was understood to be desirous of leaving there and whose praise was in all the churches in this region round about, with a similar result. "He had concluded to stay in Sutton." Rev. William Bowen, an excellent preacher, was next called and he also declined. Notwithstanding these disappointments and the want of a pastor the church prospered, nine persons being received to membership during the interregnum. At length, after three years, Rev. David Wright acceded to the wishes of the church and was installed May, 1835, but remained only ten months. While here his son, Thomas G. Wright, a member of the church, entered Colby University in Maine, graduating in 1839 and becoming, after completing a theological course of study, a useful and honored Baptist minister in the Middle states and elsewhere.

In March, 1836, a unanimous call was given to the first pastor here, Rev. Mr. Morse, then of West Cambridge. But "he could not see it his duty to come." The following July the services of Rev. Caleb Brown were secured, continuing till March, 1839. During this time the church enjoyed harmony and prosperity, seven being added to its members. But a great sorrow came to the family of the pastor in the death of his only son, Charles E. Brown, a youth of seventeen, "possessed of an amiable disposition and beloved by all," the sad event occurring, "after a distressing sickness which he bore with meek submission," Sept. 17, 1837. So deeply pained were the parents by this terrible affliction, and feeling that they could not remain where there was so much to remind them of it, that Mr. Brown resigned his pastorate and left for a field of labor less fraught with painful memories and associations.

Rev. Benjamin Remington, an evangelist, commenced laboring with the church in the fall of 1839. Much religious interest was awakened in the community by his preaching. A series of special meetings was inaugurated and continued three and four days in a week during a good part of the following winter, the Congregationalists with their pastor, Rev. Cyrus Mann, uniting in the work the latter part of the time. As a result of this revival, forty-one persons were added to the church during the year, a still larger number entering the Congregational fellow-



ship. Some of the converts have, in later years, been large contributors to the spiritual and financial strength of the church.

In March of the same year, 1840, George D. Felton, a graduate of Brown University in 1839, was called to the pastorate and, having accepted, was duly installed June 13th, Rev. T. B. Swain of Worcester preaching on the occasion. Mr. Felton quickly won his way to the hearts of both old and young, enjoying a successful ministry of two and a half years, at the expiration of which period he tendered his resignation on account of the feeble health of his wife which made a residence near the sea desirable. The resignation was sorrowfully accepted. During his pastorate the church bought the "parsonage" built by ten of the brethren in 1836.

Rev. Chandler Curtis accepted a call to serve the church in the pastoral office January, 1843. His able, scholarly preaching attracted much attention and the power of the Holy Spirit was soon manifested. The covenant meetings were largely attended, unusual religious interest among all classes prevailed in the east part of the town, some converts were made, and there were strong indications of a speedily coming prosperity to the church. But the expectations awakened were not realized. Differences of opinion upon some of the teachings of the Bible, the existence of which became apparent during Mr. Felton's pastorate, became more pronounced. Several members, some of them leading ones, accepted the views of William Miller in regard to the second coming of Christ and withdrew from fellowship, establishing meetings designed to promote their new found faith, at the town hall. Others, having adopted "no Sabbath principles," gave up their membership, and still others who felt that the church did not sufficiently condemn Southern slavery. Many of those withdrawing were excluded and disowned by those remaining. Thus the organization lost much of its numerical and financial strength, and felt itself unable at the close of the year to support a minister, and the pulpit therefore became vacant. But in April an arrangement was made with Mr. Curtis, who remained in town, to resume his labors for a half, if not for all, the time the ensuing year. This arrangement terminated April 27, 1845. During the two years' labors of Mr. Curtis he welcomed six to the fellowship of the church.

In the following June Rev. Jonathan Forbush assumed the pastoral office. Successful in other fields of labor, it was hoped he would call back some of those who had espoused error and left the fold, and bring many others to Christ. But such hope was not realized. In March, 1847, Mr. Forbush closed his labors, having baptized three persons while here.

George Carpenter was ordained to the work of the ministry and installed pastor Oct. 14, 1847, the sermon being given by Rev. Edward Savage of Fitchburg. He remained preaching the





Gospel faithfully, struggling with the weakened church against many difficulties which greatly hindered his usefulness till April, 1850, when he gave way to Rev. Martin Byrne, who continued his labors only till the following March, 1851.

The church was at this time in a very low state. For ten years its members had been constantly decreasing by death, dismissal, and exclusion without corresponding additions. Financially weak and unable to support a minister, it was without a pastor for the next ten years. It had preaching, however, most of the time, the pulpit being supplied by Revs. Chandler Curtis, John Walker, W. S. Wilder, Asaph Merriam, Franklin Merriam, Mr. W. K. Davy, and Mr. Joseph Barber. When vacant Sabbaths occurred Dea. Joel Merriam addressed the people. The Sunday school and prayer meetings were generally kept up. During this period nine persons were received to membership.

In the autumn of 1861—the year of the breaking out of the Rebellion—the prospects of the church seemed darker than ever. Only thirty-eight members were reported, and the times were inauspicious. But the ladies came to the rescue. Through their efforts, chiefly, money was raised and the services of Rev. John Peacock, an evangelist, were secured. A series of special meetings, in which the Divine power was manifest, resulted in numerous conversions and in eight baptisms. Renewed interest prevailed and Rev. J. H. Lerner was engaged “to supply for awhile.”

The location of the old house of worship being deemed unfavorable to the growth and prosperity of the church, it was decided early in the ministry of Mr. Lerner to erect a new one in the central village. Plans were provided accordingly, and during the year 1863 the main part of the present edifice was erected, the dedication taking place Dec. 30th, Rev. Franklin Merriam preaching the sermon. A chapel was built in 1870, and the tower and surmounting spire, with the accompanying bell and clock, giving the whole a neat, symmetrical appearance, were added in 1872. Great harmony and hearty co-operation existed in regard to the new church building enterprise. An interesting work of grace was carried on in the autumn of 1864 and the months following, with gratifying results. But the pastor's health failing, he was obliged to close his labors in March, 1865. He was a man of Christlike spirit, an interesting preacher, and an excellent pastor, “greatly beloved by all.”

On the first Sabbath in May Rev. Edward Mills began a ministry of nearly two years' duration, baptizing nine of the recent converts, to which three others were soon after added. Abundant prosperity attended his labors, twenty-five making a public profession of faith under him, one of whom, George T. Raymond, afterward entered the Baptist ministry. In 1866 the first parish house was disposed of and the present one purchased.





Rev. Robert G. Johnson entered upon his labors as pastor in July, 1867. Under his influence an interesting revival took place two years later. In the spring of 1870 meetings were held at the house of Mr. Artemas Merriam, at which "the Holy Spirit fell upon the people like a gentle summer shower." Early the following year Mr. Durant, afterward founder of Wellesley College, conducted union meetings in town, resulting in the addition of thirteen persons to the church. The whole number received by Mr. Johnson, in a stay of four years and two months, was sixty—thirty-eight by baptism and twenty-two by letter—the tokens of a faithful ministry. While he was in charge, Joel Merriam, the first deacon of the church, passed to his reward on high, Aug. 20, 1867. He was a decided, consecrated Christian, liberal according to his means, active in all moral reforms as in the work of his church, and a lay preacher and exhorter, though unlicensed, of unusual ability, whose services at home and abroad were gratefully appreciated.

Rev. Watson A. Worthington commenced a ministry of four years here in December, 1871, during which time five persons were received into the church by baptism and nine by letter. A great loss to the Baptist cause was sustained by the death, May 7, 1873, of Hon. Joel Merriam, son of Dea. Joel Merriam, who for some years had been one of its most liberal and influential adherents and supporters. A sad bereavement, moreover, came to the pastor and his family by the drowning, in Meetinghouse Pond, while bathing, of an only son, Charles S. Worthington, a bright and promising lad of fourteen; the afflictive event occurring July 30, 1873. The interior of the church building was very much improved and beautified during Mr. Worthington's pastorate, at a cost of over \$700. A new set of pulpit furnishings was given by Mrs. Samantha Ellis, whose contributions to objects and purposes connected with the church were large and frequent as time went on.

Soon after the close of the labors of Mr. Worthington, in December, 1875, Rev. Joseph Barber, whose services in 1859 were kindly remembered, was invited to the vacant post. He accepted and began his work in April, 1876. His pastorate was the longest in the history of the church, continuing till August, 1883,—seven years and four months. He kindly preached the truth and carefully led the people. Six persons were baptized by him as the visible tokens of his ministry.

While he was in office the church celebrated the semi-centennial of its founding, which occurred March 31, 1880. A historical address was given by the pastor, and a sermon upon "The Increasing Church of the next Fifty Years" was preached by Rev. C. M. Bowers, D. D., of Clinton. An original hymn was contributed by Mrs. Ann C. Roper, daughter of a former pastor, Rev. Chandler Curtis. The occasion was one of great interest.



During Mr. Barber's pastorate the church suffered the loss of two of its oldest and most useful members. Mrs. Samantha Ellis died Oct. 16, 1881. For twenty years she had been one of the chief financial supporters of all the activities and interests of her communion. Her superior business ability secured to her means of usefulness which she distributed with a liberal hand but unostentatiously, many of her benefactions being unknown to the public before her death. Dea. John Foskett fell asleep in Jesus April 23, 1883. In all his relations to the church he was eminently faithful. He served as its clerk more than half a century with commendable efficiency, interspersing his records with collateral facts and comments which have been of great service in the preparation of this sketch, as frequent extracts copied herein and duly marked will show.

In September, 1883, Rev. Lyman Partridge, the present pastor, took charge of the pulpit. In the following January a work of grace began and continued through the year with gratifying results. The congregation and Sabbath school increased in numbers, and works of benevolence were multiplied. Between 1884 and 1887 thirty were added to the church, twenty-six by baptism, and \$768 were contributed for benevolent purposes. April 27, 1884, the baptistry was dedicated, the pastor administering the ordinance of baptism and preaching a sermon upon "The Places of Baptism mentioned in the New Testament."

Joel Merriam was elected deacon of the church April 6, 1830, resigned February, 1846; Benjamin Harrington, January 1834, resigned July, 1841; John Whitney, July, 1841, died March, 1844; John Foskett, February, 1846, died April, 1883; John P. Roper, November, 1867; J. Hervey Merriam, March, 1884, resigned February, 1886; Frank A. Merriam, March, 1886. Present incumbents, John P. Roper and F. A. Merriam.

John Foskett was clerk from April, 1830, to April, 1883; Henry J. Partridge from March, 1884, to the present date.

The following bequests have been left the church: In 1873, \$3,000 by Hon. Joel Merriam; in 1875, \$200 by Mrs. Mary Miles; in 1884, \$150 by Mrs. Luke Sawin. In 1873, Gen. Nelson A. Miles made it a present of \$300.

During the twenty-five years ending September, 1887, the church raised for all purposes \$30,508. The amount contributed for benevolent purposes in twenty-one years previous to that date was \$3,195.63, or an average of over \$150 a year. The smallest sum raised in one year was \$38 in 1872; the largest \$301.73 in 1887.

The following persons have served as clerk of the Baptist society since its formation: Joel Merriam, 1827-1835; John Foskett, 1835-1836; John Fessenden, 1836-1838; John Foskett, 1838-1845; Joel Merriam, Jr., 1845-1847; John E. Whitney, 1847-1850; Daniel C. Miles, 1850-1876; Henry J. Partridge, 1876-1885; William E. Gilson, 1885—.





The Sabbath school was instituted May 15, 1831. The largest average attendance for a year was 95, in 1871; the smallest, 20 in 1861. It has had eleven superintendents, Daniel C. Miles serving with occasional intervals between 1850 and 1875; J. Hervey Merriam for eleven years since.

The school supported Ezekiel C. Smith at Shaw University, Raleigh, N. C., 1875-1878. After a brief but brilliant career as teacher and preacher, Mr. Smith was, in 1886(?), appointed United States minister to Liberia by President Cleveland. For several years, beginning with 1884, the school paid the expenses of a student at Spelman Seminary, Atlanta, Ga. The whole number enrolled is now (1887) 140; average attendance for the year, 67.

The entire list of church members between 1830 and 1887 numbered 364; 218 having been admitted by baptism, 146 by letter. It now has 95. It is free from debt and has a fund of \$3,800. [L. P., written in 1890.]

**Millerism.** The religious history of Westminster could hardly be deemed complete were it not to refer briefly to the special manifestation of mistaken piety and zeal which took place in the years 1842 and 1843, in connection with the then widely promulgated doctrines of the speedy second coming of Christ and the immediately following end of the world. It was only a local exhibition of what occurred in many towns of the vicinity, the outcome of an excitement that, beginning with the preaching of one William Miller, some ten years before, extended finally through the entire northern part of the country, and even into other lands. Meetings were held at private houses and in the town hall; sermons, constructed for the most part out of the highly wrought imagery of Scripture, were preached, with vivid illustrations of the theories inculcated displayed upon canvas; impassioned and terror-inspiring appeals, well calculated to affect and move undisciplined and easily-impressed minds and hearts, were sounded; all together producing an excitement rising to the intensity of frenzy almost, such as the town had never experienced before. Many converts were made. Members of churches, accepting the new views, separated from their old ecclesiastical fellowship and joined the enthusiasts, and an almost incredible activity and zeal prevailed. In the minds of many of these people, the very day when the events portrayed were to transpire had been revealed and made sure to believing souls,—the day of the Lord's appearance, with attendant signs and wonders and judgments,—the mighty consummation of all terrestrial things, with accompanying wailings of the lost and rejoicings of the glorified mingling in the airs of departing time. So confident were these devotees of the soundness of their views, that large numbers of them, in this and neighboring towns, left their homes never to return, as they vainly thought, when the fixed day drew near, and gathered



in solemn convocation at the residence of one of their leading men, where accommodations had been made ready for them, there to await the sound of the trumpet that should announce that the end had come.

The expected day arrived. The sun rose bright as ever in the eastern sky. The morning hours grew to high noon, and noon declined as it had done before. The evening shades at length wrapped the world in its accustomed darkness. Other days came and went, as days had come and gone from the beginning. The deluded zealots returned to their abandoned dwellings, to take up once more the daily tasks of their mundane life, and to muse at their leisure upon their strange career. The excitement very naturally soon died out, the earth kept on in its accustomed course, showing no signs of age or decay, and the religious concerns of the community assumed their former state, going on in their regularly appointed way as they had done before, and as they continue to do to this day.

**Conclusion.** In bringing this chapter to a close, and therewith completing the ecclesiastical history of Westminster, a few supplementary observations seem to be not only desirable but necessary to a comprehensive and just presentation of the important interests under review.

I. It is to be noted that the portraiture which has been given is ecclesiastical rather than religious; that, full as it is, it is at best only an uncertain token of the inner, moral and spiritual life of the people, not an absolute, authoritative expression and test thereof. There is a form of piety without the power; there is sometimes a power of piety where no outward form exists. All the real penitence, aspiration, faith, trust, love, in a community, or in the world, does not publish itself to the eyes and ears of men, is not entered upon parish registers, nor can it be reckoned up and preserved in church lists. It is easy to gather statistics, to count up and chronicle nominal conversions, baptisms, professed believers, actual subscribers to a constitution, covenant, or creed, but who can number the secret prayers, the purposes of amendment, the unuttered vows of loyalty and consecration, the yearning desires and holy impulses awakened in the human breast by the power of the Divine Spirit, — who adequately portray, by tongue or pen, the wonderful lineaments of the life of God in the soul of man! There is more in religion, and more of religion, in any and every town, than appears to outward observation, or can be translated into ordinary human speech.

II. It is again to be noted that while the several religious bodies, whose doings have been detailed in these pages, have stood for certain distinctive forms of faith or modes of administration, respectively, and have done their several kinds of work, each in its own way, they have all contributed somewhat to the virtue and piety of the people at large, and aided in promoting



the general morality, order, welfare, and happiness of the community: No one of them has had exclusive access to the waters of life. No one can claim a monopoly of Christian excellence and worth. No one has done all that has been accomplished in town for the uplifting and redemption of man and the glory of God. Each of them has had among its adherents and supporters men of integrity and high character, respected, trusted, honored by their fellow townsfolk; women also, of meek and quiet spirit, kind and charitable, devout, worthy of, and receiving, the esteem and commendation of all who knew them.

III. Once more it is to be noted that however divergent the theology of the different churches in town, or their opinions respecting the ways and means of accomplishing the ends they had in view, there has been, nevertheless, a growing spirit of mutual respect, toleration, and harmony in them all. Whatever of distrust, jealousy, sectarian feeling, hostility or bitterness, may have ever at any time existed among them is slowly passing away. They are, each and all, laying the emphasis more and more, as time goes on, upon their agreements, and less and less upon their disagreements. More and more upon Christian character, and less and less upon theoretical belief, as the supreme thing in life. They are, without exception, recognizing more than formerly the importance and indispensable value of exalting to the uttermost "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and of uniting all their energies, as far as possible, for the building up of the kingdom of God, which is righteousness and peace and joy in the earth. This is a feature in the religious history of the town worthy of special mention, as indicative of what is transpiring in all communities, and as prophetic of the coming union and co-operation of all Christian people in the great work of redeeming the world. In this view of the matter must all true friends of the public virtue and welfare, all true friends of pure and undefiled religion, see cause of heartfelt rejoicing and of devout thanksgiving to the great Author of all good, "of whom and through whom and by whom are all things, and to whom be glory forever."





## CHAPTER XVIII.

### HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS AND ACTIVITIES.

#### PROVISION FOR THE POOR AND UNFORTUNATE—SPECIFIC REFORMS— TEMPERANCE, ANTI-SLAVERY, PEACE, ETC.

It is a fundamental fact of human existence on the earth, that the race is one and indivisible, having a common origin, a common nature, and common inalienable rights, which make it a great brotherhood. Out of this fundamental fact of the unity of mankind comes the law of reciprocity and mutual dependence, voiced in the Scripture apothegm "no man liveth to himself," and the consequent moral obligation to cherish and manifest always and forever the spirit of kindness, good-will, helpfulness, and charity in all the conduct and relations of life. This spirit characterizes in some good degree every noble soul, animates the better types of modern civilization, and gives birth to ameliorations and reforms which belt the world as with a girdle of golden light and make glad the hearts and the habitations of the children of men.

Something of this spirit has prevailed among the people of this town from the beginning, molding their personal character, shaping their public policy, and promoting in manifold ways the general welfare and happiness. Some of the more marked expressions of this humane, philanthropic feeling, of this beneficent, helpful sentiment in these borders, it is the province of this history to note and portray in appropriate and commendatory terms.

#### I. PROVISION FOR THE POOR.

The inhabitants of Westminster have never been unmindful of their duty to those of their number who from any cause have been brought into a condition of penury and dependent need, nor have they been indisposed to devise measures and adopt plans of relief. What is even better than this, they at an early day sought to prevent pauperism and the many evils engendered by it by passing a resolve quoted in full on page 140, condemning idleness, wasteful expenditure, extravagant habits, etc., on the one hand, and, on the other, commending industry, frugality, and other economic virtues as of primary importance and value. Moreover, in order to escape from burdens liable to be imposed upon them by an influx of thriftless, indigent persons and families from other localities, they took advantage of certain



Provincial laws for such cases made and provided, which permitted "Cautions" or "Warnings," as they were termed, to be issued by the public authorities against such new-comers as in their judgment might become a burden to the community. In this way the town was relieved of all responsibility for the future support of those involved, their last place of legal residence being held for all claims in that regard. This action was sometimes of a very sweeping character, including in its decrees not only the improvident and worthless, but those every way respectable and thrifful, with no likelihood of ever becoming a public charge. There was "no respect of persons" in the matter, as indicated in the fact that at one period, about a hundred years ago, half the population—more than 600 persons, representing 211 families—came under the ban of exclusion from the privileges of "settlement" here. Among them were many who, in after years, took rank as first citizens of the town, and highly honored members of the community at large. The custom fell into disuse about the time of the close of the last century.

If there were any instances of actual want in the township before incorporation took place, they were not a matter of record, having been relieved probably by private charity or from a church "poor fund," as is thought to have been sometimes the case. The first person to become a public charge was Hannah Mead, daughter of Israel Mead of Lexington and sister of Sarah (Mead), wife of Nathan Pierce. She became dependent evidently by reason of sickness, the first money appropriated in her behalf, Feb. 14, 1764, being 7s. 6d. in payment of Dr. Everett's bill for professional services. She soon after deceased.

At the same date the first general grant, £20, was made by the town for the poor, and an additional sum of £13 6s. 8d. on the 19th of July following. May 4, 1768, it was voted "to allow Nathaniel Wheeler £1 13s. 4d. in full for his keeping Reuben Ball before he was bound to Mr. Woodward." Of what was done in aid of the families of soldiers who were absent in the Revolutionary service, sufficient mention has been made in Chapter X.

So far as can be learned from the records it was the custom in those days for the Selectmen to have charge of the common claimants for public aid, and provide for their care, clothing, etc., in the best manner possible by private contract with parties willing to receive them into their homes and attend to their necessities. The number of such was small, not exceeding, except at some special times, three or four persons. On the 5th of March, 1789, a different course was adopted by the town's voting "to lett out the poor at Vandue to the Cheapest bidder" and the only one apparently then to be provided for was disposed of to Captain Hager. For exactly how long a period this





method was pursued it is impossible to determine, although it still prevailed as late as 1821, when at the March meeting a committee appointed to take into consideration the best mode of supporting the poor reported that it is best "to let the poor out *as usual* with this reserve, that if any person bids off the poor that in the opinion of the Selectmen will not be likely to do well by them they shall not be under obligation to put them there; we also think it advisable for the Selectmen often to make inquiry respecting the usage of the poor generally." This report was accepted and without doubt controlled the action of the authorities in the matter for several years afterward.

As early as 1803, however, a movement was started contemplating the purchase of a farm for the purpose of establishing a home for those dependent upon the town for care and sustenance. The subject came up in a legal meeting held Oct. 24th and was referred to a committee of which Lieut. Timothy Heywood was chairman, who reported the proposed action "inexpedient." A few years later the question was again agitated with a similar result. And there the matter rested until 1823, when it received fresh consideration, but to no practical purpose.

Nevertheless, there was a growing feeling in the community that the plan of caring for the poor, so long in vogue in town and elsewhere, was not only attended with many annoyances and difficulties and needlessly expensive, but was liable to many abuses, and that the dictates of kindness and humanity, added to other considerations, urged a change of administration in this department of public service. At length, at the March meeting in 1829, Simeon Sanderson, Esq., Dea. James White, and Ezra Wood were chosen a committee to examine the subject of a poor establishment, and present the result of such examination at an adjourned meeting. They attended to the duty assigned them, and on the 6th of April brought forward an elaborate report which closed with a recommendation that the town provide at an early day such an establishment as was contemplated. The report was accepted and steps were taken to carry its recommendation into effect.

The year passed by, however, but nothing further was done than to examine farms, obtain prices, estimate expenses, etc., until March 1, 1830, when, as a result of information obtained, Simeon Sanderson, Esq., Timothy Doty, and Merari Spalding, Esq., were chosen agents "to take a deed for the town of Mr. John Jackson's farm and to make payment or give security in behalf of the town to the amount of twenty-five hundred dollars." On the 5th of April following, the Overseers of the Poor, who were the agents just named, were instructed "to purchase all kinds of stock, so called, and furniture necessary for the poor establishment," and "to do or transact anything that



shall be necessary to carry into effect the spirit of such an establishment." From the report of a committee chosen to settle with the overseers a year later, it appears that the whole cost of the farm, buildings, furniture, stock, tools, etc., to that date was \$3,258.38, which was increased by needful expenditures made shortly afterward to \$3,490.06, the amount permanently invested in the institution.

From all that can be learned, it seems that the care and management of the poor for seventy years after the incorporation of the town, devolved upon the Selectmen, the cost of the same, including all moneys paid out for the indigent and needy, being reckoned in the general expense account. A separate board of officers to have charge of all such matters, entitled "Overseers of the Poor," was first chosen in 1830, and the practice of annually electing such a board continued till 1861, when the duty involved was assigned to the Selectmen, in whose hands it has since remained, the formal vote, however, being taken at each annual meeting, that "the Selectmen act as Overseers of the Poor for the current year."

For more than thirty-five years the establishment on Beech Hill, purchased in 1830, was used for the housing and support of the poor, with no very great expenditure for repairs, improvements, etc., above and beyond what would naturally be required. But time and use had told somewhat severely upon the buildings at the expiration of that period, and it became evident that considerable extra outlay would be necessary at an early day to put them in proper condition for much further service. This consideration, taken in connection with the fact that experience had brought to light certain serious objections to the farm itself, which could not be readily obviated, gave rise to the question of disposing of the estate and of seeking a more satisfactory location, which resulted in the choosing of a committee, consisting of Joseph Hagar, Augustine Whitney, and Aretas Raymond, March 4, 1869, to consider the matter and report at a future meeting, which they accordingly did. The whole subject was then referred to the Selectmen with instructions to sell and buy again, repair the old buildings or erect new ones, as they might deem best.

Pursuant to this vote sundry repairs were made, in order to serve the present needs, as there were from time to time during several succeeding years. The prevailing feeling, however, seemed to be in favor of a new location, which at length materialized in the purchase of the former Jonas W. Whitney place near the North Common (recently vacated), and the corresponding sale of the old farm to Albert Sanderson of Gardner, the bargain being ratified by the town in regular meeting held Nov. 3, 1874. The new purchase was renovated, put in order, and made suitable for the proper housing and care of the town's dependents, whither they were transferred at an early date.





There they and their successors were detained and provided for until 1891, when, under the provision of a newly enacted law, Westminster entered into an arrangement with several neighboring towns for the more economical and satisfactory care of the poor within their respective limits, founding a union establishment at Holden, to which all persons subject to public charge were removed and in which they still remain.

The several superintendents of the "town farm" from the beginning, so far as ascertained, are herewith submitted in supposed chronological order: John Jackson, Joseph Rugg, Albert Crane, John Mosman, Isaac Seaver, Benjamin Miller, Cummings Hale, Amos P. Spalding, S. F. Towne, Josiah C. Jackson, D. S. Elkins, Stephen Wood, John V. Platts, M. N. Lyon, Luke Divoll, ——— Spalding, ——— Chadwick, William P. Rabb, I. W. Heywood, ——— Halstat, the last in office. Most of the later ones were from abroad, and only remained in town as residents during their term of service.

#### SPECIFIC MORAL REFORMS.

While the people of this town have given the attention indicated to the needs of their own community and provided for the care and sustenance of those in their midst whom misfortune, thriftlessness, or vicious indulgence had brought to poverty and made objects of public charity, they have not been indifferent to those broader humanitarian claims which have been represented in the great reform movements of the present century; movements inaugurated for the purpose either of resisting and overthrowing some of the prevailing evils of society at large, or in a more general way ameliorating the condition and diminishing the sorrow of their misguided and suffering fellow-men. The cry of the wronged and the perishing, of the degraded and forsaken, has not been refused a hearing on their part, nor when heard disregarded. It has rather awakened interest, sympathy, fellow-feeling, which have prompted to active efforts of a distinctively philanthropic nature, worthy of favorable recognition. The more important of these will be noticed under headings designating the causes which they respectively represent.

**Temperance.** In common with other towns and communities, Westminster on the part of considerable numbers of her population has suffered seriously from the use, as a beverage, of intoxicating liquors. Here, as elsewhere, have the evils of intemperance been experienced, as witnessed in squandered incomes, wasted estates, wrecked homes, ruined characters, and premature deaths—in private and public discord, demoralization, and misery. And here, as elsewhere, have there been those ready to do what was possible on their part to stay the progress of the mighty curse and bring it to a perpetual end, not only in their own vicinity but throughout our land and world.





The people of this town for two or three generations shared no doubt the common belief of their day, that alcoholic beverages were not simply harmless but conducive to health, strength, and efficiency of both body and mind. The use of them was well-nigh universal and traffic in them was deemed as legitimate and honorable as it was in any other article of common utility, no one suffering in reputation, social standing, or otherwise, by reason of being engaged in such traffic. The traders in the place supplied New England rum and other intoxicants to their customers as freely and as conscientiously, no doubt, as they did molasses, flour, and other common articles of merchandise. The popular sentiment in regard to the whole matter may be learned from a few passages found in the records of the olden time, contrasting in a marked degree with those of later days. For instance, on the 16th of August, 1792, after the citizens had voted to clear and improve the grounds about the meeting-house, they also

*"Voted, that there be drink provided by the Town for those persons that come to work on the common as shall be Necessary, then chose Mr. Jones, Col. Dike, and Capt Bigelow, to provide liquor and powder sufficient for the hands while Labouring on the Common."*

On the 18th of October, the same year, a committee having been chosen to remove certain horse stables which were deemed out of place to a more satisfactory location, it was furthermore

*"Voted that there be liquor provided sufficient to remove said Stables at the Cost of the Town."*

In the midst of a long town meeting held June 15, 1797, for the purpose of allotting and letting out materials for several new schoolhouses about to be built, it was

*"Voted to have three quarts of Spirits Properly mixt for Refreshment on the Town's Cost."*

*"Voted that Mr. Ruben Sawin and Capt. Willm. Edggel Procure the same."*

In the report of a committee appointed to let the building of a bridge near Ephraim Robbins' house, dated Oct. 9, 1798, appears the following among the items of cost: "the Liquor that was Expended at the Vendue amounted to one Dollar."

A few extracts from the Selectmen's book are of the same general nature, as illustrations of the feeling and habits of those times:

"Dec. 4 1796. To Lt Nathan Howard for a barrel of Cyder for Mrs. Taylor—0.66.

"Jan. 3, 1797. To Levi Holden for a barrel of Cyder for the poor—1.33.

"Nov. 27 1801. To Capt. Hoar for Liquor had at the Vandue of the Buring Ground Wall—0.60.

"Nov. 7 1803. Received of the Selectmen of Westminster three Dollars and 5 Cents for Rum and other sundries for Mr. Phinehas Gates.

"ISAAC MILES.



"Apr. 1, 1805. To Capt. Hoar for Liquor for letting out the poor — 1.20.

"Sept. 1809. To Dodd and Sawyer for Rum and Sugar on the new County road — 5.31.

"Nov. 27, 1812. To Wm. Penniman for tody when vandueing the poor in 1810, 1811 and 1812 — 3.30.

"Nov. 27 1813. To Zadoc Sawyer for Rum and paper to make Catridges — 2.38.

"April 3, 1815. Wm. Penniman for tody to let out the poor with, — 2.00."

As a further illustration of the prevalence of the drinking habits of bygone days, and of the extent of the traffic in spirituous liquors, it may be stated that for many years before and after the opening of the present century there were six or seven public houses in town licensed by the county court for the sale of such liquors, while several of the common stores had the same privilege. About the year 1825, however, the number of places for the sale of intoxicants began to fall off, and the diminution went on until less than a generation later only three or four remained. And these, through the agency of the ever active and vigilant friends of temperance in the community, supplemented by state legislation calculated to restrict or prohibit the unholy traffic, gradually decreased till not a single one was left to do its work of mischief and death in these borders,—till no alcoholic spirits whatever were sold here, as has been the case for many years, except clandestinely and in defiance of the statutes of the Commonwealth.

The precise date at which the subject of temperance began to be agitated in this community can not be ascertained. As early as 1813 the selectmen received an order from the grand jury of the county of Worcester "to caution all the Retailers in town not to mix any Liquor in their stores," which appears to have been the first movement of any sort designed to limit or control in any way the traffic whose calamitous effects were already causing anxiety and alarm on the part of the friends of virtue and the public welfare. It would seem that the Rev. Cyrus Mann, if not the first avowed exponent of the cause of temperance here, was its first open advocate and the first expounder of the principles which it represented. It is more than probable that Doctor Beecher's "Six Sermons on Intemperance," delivered at Litchfield, Conn., in 1826, and printed for general distribution, were instrumental in calling his attention to, and awakening his interest in, the subject. As early as 1828 the reform had numerous adherents in town, largely as a result of his reading those sermons to such of his congregation as were willing to hear them during intermission. About the same time he took strong ground against the use of liquor at funerals, and members of his church were disciplined for undue indulgence in the use of the intoxicating cup. His active efforts in this behalf in the pulpit and elsewhere, at home and abroad, aroused considerable opposition even among his





own people, though he was supported and encouraged by Deacons Murdock and Peckham, the Woods, Jonas Miller, and other leading men of his church and society. One of these, William S. Bradbury, who had recently opened a store for general country merchandise, including spirituous liquors, at the stand so long occupied by him, became an early convert to temperance principles, and, as an evidence of his sincerity, rolled the barrels of West India rum, etc., which he had on hand, out of his basement and began to stave in the heads of them with an axe. A fellow-townsmen passing by asked what he was doing. "Letting this hell-fire out upon the ground," was the reply. The inquirer responded, "Why, if you go on like this, you will bring up at the poorhouse." "To the poorhouse let it be then, but I will sell no more liquor," said Mr. Bradbury, and there the colloquy ended. Nor were the other churches and societies in town wholly indifferent to the claims of the cause under notice. The Universalists, presumably under the lead of their pastor, Rev. Charles Hudson, passed a vote in 1830 designed to check the drinking habits of the times, and Mr. Hudson himself at a later day was active in promoting the cause, taking a prominent part in public meetings held to advance its interests, and becoming, after his election to Congress in 1840, president of the Congressional Temperance Society in Washington. The Baptists also came early into the work, Dea. Joel Merriam, perhaps, being their most earnest and devoted representative, though bravely supported by a goodly number of his brethren.

On the 27th of April, 1829, a temperance society was formed, auxiliary to the American Temperance Society which had been organized at Boston three years before on the principle of total abstinence from all that can intoxicate, with Marcus Morton, afterwards Governor of the state, for president. The secretary of the local society was Abraham Wood, but the names of its other officers have not been ascertained. It had a considerable membership, held regular and earnest meetings, and, no doubt, did much to call public attention to the cause for which it stood, gain for it steadfast and influential adherents, and prepare the way for larger activities and the grander work afterwards accomplished.

So thoroughly interested in this reform were many of the members of the First Church that under the leadership of Edward, afterwards Deacon Kendall, the following resolution was adopted by that body, at a meeting held Feb. 2, 1837, to wit :

*"Resolved, that in the opinion of this church the use of all intoxicating liquors as a drink is immoral and sinful and that such use by church members is calculated to bring reproach upon the cause of religion."*

It was during the decade now in review, 1830-1840, that county temperance associations began to be formed in the state of Massachusetts, or associations covering a territory which



included several towns conveniently located with respect to each other, but not necessarily bounded by county limitations. Under this general system of co-operative action, the body known as the "Worcester Northeast District Temperance Union" was organized at Leominster, May 1, 1839, with Dea. Benjamin F. Wood of this town as its first president. For many years it was a large, active, and influential body, composed of the most earnest and devoted friends of the cause in the several towns entitled to a representation in it, but in these later years other organizations seem to have taken possession of the field, and absorbed largely the interest which formerly gave it peculiar efficiency, though it still keeps its colors flying, and helps to carry on the warfare against the giant curse of the age.

In the year 1840 the so-called Washingtonian movement was inaugurated in the city of Baltimore by six inebriates, which wrought mightily throughout the land for the furtherance of the cause. Its influence was felt for good in Westminster where many public meetings were held, at which addresses were made by such men as John H. W. Hawkins, Dr. Charles Jewett, John B. Gough, Rev. Edwin H. Chapin, General Riley, and other distinguished champions of the principles of total abstinence. The result was a great awakening on the part of the people at large, the rescue of considerable numbers of persons who had been slaves of the drink habit, the conversion of many who had been indifferent to the claims of temperance or were addicted to a moderate use of liquor, and the creation of a public sentiment, which, at an early day, expressed itself in municipal affairs—in the election of well-known temperance men to public office, and the passage of votes calculated to restrict the traffic in alcoholics, and hold it to a rigid account before the laws of the Commonwealth. That a sleepless vigilance in this latter respect characterized those charged with the duty of caring for the interests of the town, causing the apprehension and conviction of persons guilty of the illegal sale of ardent spirits, is abundantly attested by the court records of the time.

In the midst of the great awakening, to which allusion was just now made, a complete reorganization of the temperance forces in town took place. The "Pledge," which had proved a most effective agency elsewhere, not only in reforming the inebriate but in securing the co-operation of many not previously engaged in the work, was freely circulated, receiving a large number of signatures, and resulting in a great accession to the membership of the society. Under the new dispensation, Dr. John White was chosen president, with an efficient corps of subordinate officers, who led off in a vigorous and successful campaign in behalf of temperance, virtue, good order, and the public welfare, which was carried on for years, and which, in a large degree, changed the moral aspect of the town and lifted the whole community to a higher level.





Among other instrumentalities for helping on the good work, and making the future secure for the cause, was a detachment of the "Cold Water Army," in which were enlisted great numbers of the children of the town, who, by appropriate speech and song, with banner and badge and many an ingenious device, were won to and established in the principles of temperance for all the years to come.

Nor were the women mere spectators of what was going on about them, helping simply to swell the numbers at temperance gatherings, or to grace festive occasions set apart for the prosecution of the great reform. They were rather active laborers in it, recognizing the responsibility resting upon them, and rendering important service both by personal effort and by associated action also. A most efficient agency of those stirring times was the society of women, organized under a constitution, of which the preamble, pledge, and most important articles are given, as follows:

"That persons exert a more powerful influence in an associated than in an individual capacity is a truth well authenticated by facts. It is a truth, equally well authenticated, that the co-operation of female associations does greatly accelerate the cause of benevolence. Believing Temperance to be one of the most important branches of the benevolent operations of the day and little comparatively having been done by the ladies of the place for this cause, We, the ladies of Westminster, do agree to form a Society the object of which shall be to relieve the unfortunate and suffering families of the inebriate, to aid and encourage poor and reformed inebriates, and to co-operate with all Total Abstinence Societies in their efforts for the suppression of the evils of intemperance. The better to accomplish these designs we hereby mutually agree to be governed by the following Pledge, Rules, and Regulations.

"This Society shall be called '*The Westminster Martha Washington.*'"

"*Pledge.* The members of this Society agree that they will never use any intoxicating drinks as a beverage and will in all suitable ways discountenance the use of them in the community and do all in their power to reclaim the unfortunate slaves of appetite.

"It shall be considered the duty of each member of this Society to make known to any member of the Board of Officers all cases of habitual drunkenness that may come within the limits of the Society, in order that the subjects may be plead with and if possible induced to abandon the injurious practice and sign the second Declaration of Independence—the Total Abstinence Pledge. They shall, as far as possible, attend all meetings and induce all intemperate persons to attend, so that by countenancing the meetings the glorious cause in which we are engaged will not suffer and grow languid."

In a few months after its organization, this association had a membership of about 200, made up largely of the intelligent, active, and earnest women of the town, who labored diligently, conscientiously, and effectively for the reclamation of the fallen, the relief of the needy, and the true welfare, prosperity, and happiness of the community. Its first board of officers, representing every school district, were, Mrs. Sally M. Titus, *President*; Mrs. Charles Hudson and Mrs. Jonathan Forbush, *Vice-*





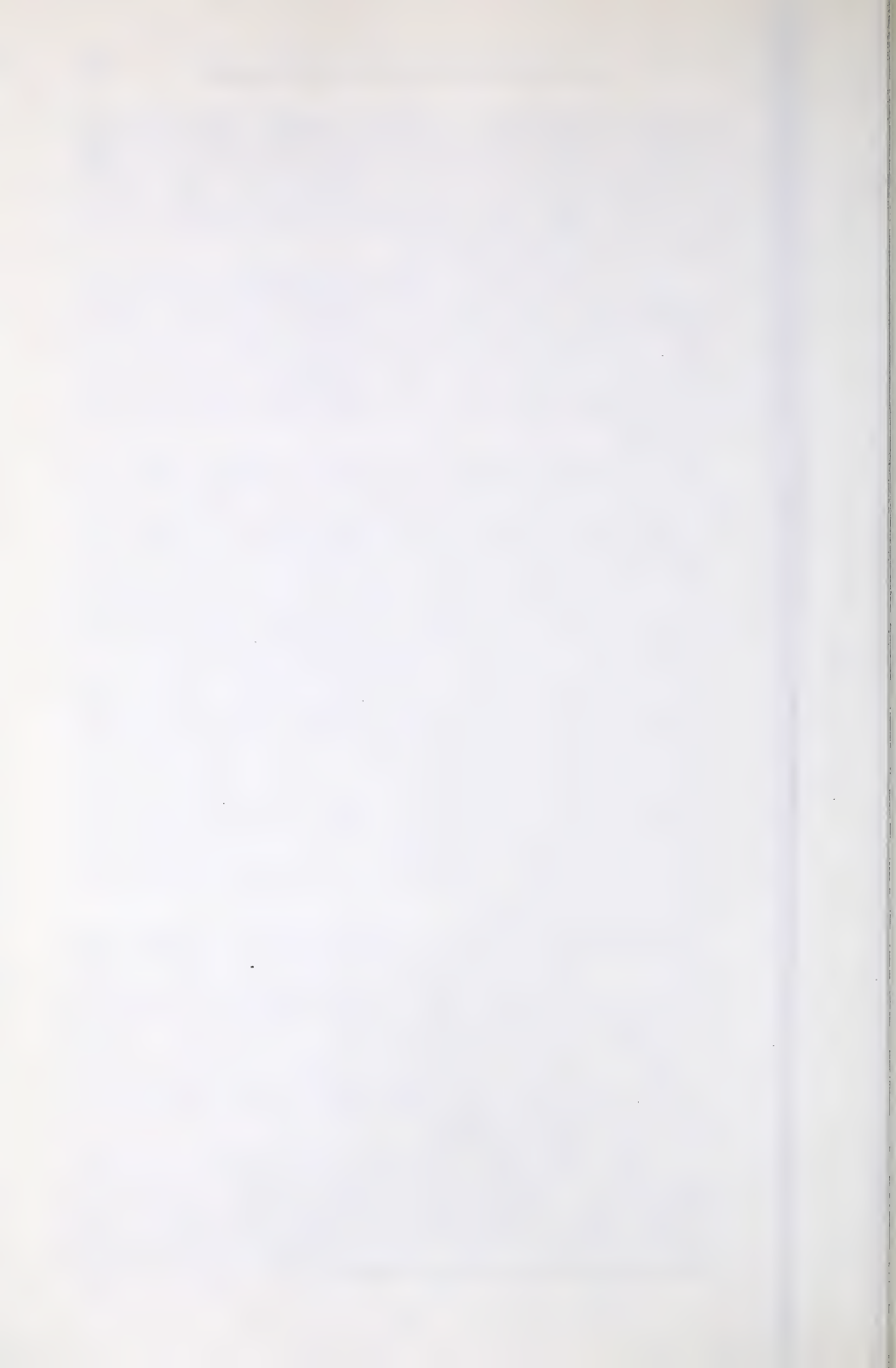
*Presidents*; Mrs. Mary M. Wood, *Secretary*; Mrs. Mary F. Kendall, *Treasurer*; Mrs. Rufus P. Chase, Mrs. Joseph Whitney, Mrs. Simeon Warren, Mrs. Reed Merriam, Mrs. Daniel Miles, Mrs. Josiah Page, Mrs. Joseph Howard, Mrs. Aaron Wood, Mrs. James Puffer, Mrs. Joshua Upham, Mrs. Reuben Sawin, Mrs. John Heywood, *Managers*.

Under the auspices of the organizations named, and by means of agencies and activities which they established co-operating with individual effort, was the great battle with King Alcohol fought nearly fifty years ago—a battle which resulted in a triumph for the right, thus rescuing the town from the fearful thralldom of the rum power and establishing it firmly on the side of sobriety, good order, and public virtue, where it remains to this day.

The work then done and the successes then gained have been followed by corresponding labors on the part of the friends of the cause, through all the intervening years. During much of the time there have been organizations—Sons of Temperance, Good Templars, and the like—to keep the camp fires of the great reform burning, to bear aloft its banner and sound its tocsin through the air—to guard its interests, maintain its principles, prevent any lapse from the lofty vantage ground it had attained, and urge it on to still grander achievements and nobler victories. The churches have been active and united in the warfare against a common foe and have done much to tone up public sentiment in this behalf, to insure vigilance and fidelity, and to sow the seed of harvests yet to come. A branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union was formed a few years since, which, under the wise direction of Mrs. Thomas Damon as President, who is aided by a corps of devoted, earnest co-adjutors, is an efficient instrumentality for the continued prosecution of the work it represents. A new lodge of the Order of Good Templars has recently been instituted with Abner F. Green as Chief Templar.

**Anti-Slavery.** It has already been made to appear, page 185, that the principles of impartial liberty had an earnest support by the inhabitants of Westminster at an early period of its history, and that the idea of chattel slavery was deemed by them utterly wrong and reprehensible. A few persons "guilty of a skin not colored like our own" were at one time held in bondage here, but the prevailing sentiment was hostile to such a custom, and it was soon eliminated from the domestic and social life of the community.

For many years there was no call or occasion for any expression, public or private, upon the great system of American oppression as it existed in the Southern States of the Union, but when the movement for its overthrow was inaugurated by Benjamin Lundy, William Lloyd Garrison, and others, it awakened an approving response in the breast of a few who heartily



espoused the cause it represented and gave it earnest sympathy and support. Nothing has been found respecting the very first active efforts here in behalf of the enslaved, but it is known that as early as 1836 an Anti-Slavery Society existed, with "Edward Kendall, Jr., Secretary." Regular meetings were held, public lectures and discussions took place, and tracts were circulated in order to awaken interest in, and gain adherents to, the unpopular and much despised reform.

Distinguished champions of freedom, among whom were William Lloyd Garrison, Adin Ballou, Dr. E. D. Hudson, Rev. Charles T. Torrey, Abby Kelly, Angelina Grimke, Sally Holley, Parker Pillsbury, Henry B. Stanton, Rev. Amos Dresser, and Frederick Douglass, visited the town from time to time pleading earnestly and eloquently for the enfranchisement of the bondman and the inborn rights of all mankind. As a result of what was done, considerable numbers took an open stand in favor of impartial liberty and against the growing usurpations of the slave power, avowing themselves ready to do what they could to insure the overthrow of the national sin.

The First Congregationalist and Baptist churches passed resolutions setting forth the iniquity of making merchandise of the bodies and souls of men, and the consequent duty of Christian believers to absolve themselves from all responsibility therefor, and to labor diligently and perseveringly for its extinction. Not only did the apostles of the anti-slavery gospel find a welcome and a generous hearing here, but the panting fugitive, fleeing from the prison house of Southern bondage and the cruelties of an inhuman master or overseer, was granted temporary shelter and help on his way to Canada—then a refuge for the weary and oppressed.

When the proposition for the admission of Texas into the American Union, in order to strengthen and perpetuate the iron rule of the slaveholding oligarchy of the South, was brought before Congress, the town, in regular meeting assembled, Dec. 23, 1844, voted 114 to 22 to petition both the National and State Legislatures in opposition to the measure, and it was done. This was understood to be a vote against the extension of slavery and indirectly against the whole slave system, and was the only one taken by the citizens in their corporate capacity upon the subject until ten years afterward.

The anti-slavery sentiment of the community was of a three-fold type, and those animated by it were grouped accordingly. A certain number followed the lead of Mr. Garrison, holding that slavery was a sin against both God and man, and that all compromises with it, both political and ecclesiastical, were wrong, and therefore not to be entered into or justified under any circumstance whatsoever. They absolved themselves, therefore, from church and state relations, and sought to advance the interests of the cause they had at heart by moral agencies alone,—





by promulgating anti-slavery truth, appealing to the public intelligence and conscience, and calling men and the nation to repentance and a new life of justice, humanity, and righteousness. This class was properly represented by such men as George Miles, Benson Bigelow, Théodore P. Locke, Benjamin and Alfred Wyman, etc. Moreover, it is to be said, in justice to all concerned, that there were women in town, respectable as to numbers, who not only lent the cause under notice their hearty sympathy, but extended to it the help of their personal co-operation. This circumstance derives additional interest and significance from the fact that the more radical friends of the slave, with whom they, for the most part, affiliated, made themselves obnoxious to multitudes in the community at large, and to many anti-slavery people even, in the early days, by honoring women with positions and responsibilities, public and otherwise, to which, by reason of the change of fifty years, every class of philanthropic workers now cordially welcomes them, and in which they render their country and their kind distinguished service.

Another class of abolitionists was composed of those who, while professing to maintain a no less faithful testimony to the moral turpitude of slaveholding, and a no less vigorous warfare against the national crime on moral grounds, claimed to be able consistently to retain their connection with both church and state; only the church must be outspoken in its advocacy of the principles of liberty, and the political party with which they were affiliated must be established and managed in the interest of freedom and humanity. And, believing that both the great parties then existing in the country were wedded to slavery, or in guilty complicity with it, they refused allegiance to them and united in the formation and support of a new party which they deemed guiltless of all such immoral entanglements. These persons were known in their day as Third Party Abolitionists or Liberty Party men, and of their number were Dea. Joel Merriam, Dea. Robert Peckham, several of the Woods, and others. Their first vote for President, on an independent and distinctively anti-slavery ticket, was cast in 1840, when they threw 9 ballots against 343 for the two other candidates. In 1844 the number had increased to 50 against 311 for the old party nominees.

A third class of anti-slavery men in Westminster was composed of those who, while recognizing the sinfulness of slaveholding, and the duty of employing all possible agencies for creating a right public opinion upon the subject of limiting the aggressions of the slave power and ultimately bringing the nation's curse to a perpetual end, believed they could effectively supplement such efforts and hasten the desired result by continuing their relations with the Whig party, to which they, with scarce an exception, belonged, and using their influence, through



their votes and otherwise, to rally that party around the standard of universal and impartial liberty, and so make it the instrumentality by which at length the slave system should be destroyed and the country become "the land of the free" as well as "the home of the brave." These men and those like minded elsewhere were known as "Conscience Whigs" in contradistinction from their pro-slavery fellow-partizans, who bore the corresponding sobriquet of "Cotton Whigs." To this class belonged Dr. John White, William S. Bradbury, Harrison G. Whitney, John Heywood, and many others, who acted under the inspiration and leadership of such statesmen as Charles Sumner, John G. Palfrey, Henry Wilson, Judge Allen, and other distinguished citizens of the Republic at that date.

Before the recurrence of another presidential election in 1848, that phase of political anti-slavery known as the "Free Soil Movement" appeared upon the arena of public affairs, under whose auspices the "Third Party" men and the "Conscience Whigs" united to form the beginning of what grew at length to be the great, triumphant, and long regnant Republican Party of the land. The vote in town for the "Free Soil" candidate for President in the year named was 190 against 210 for all others. In 1852 the corresponding vote was 143 against 218; in 1856, 293 against 70; and in 1860, when Abraham Lincoln was elected and the genius of Liberty mounted the presidential chair, 252 against 83.

Notwithstanding the seemingly vacillating state of the public mind upon the great question of the age, as indicated by the above-mentioned quadrennial votes, there was, no doubt, a steady growth of anti-slavery conviction among the people at large in town, and an increasing determination to oppose and resist, by all rightful and constitutional means, the imperious and insolent demands of the South in the interest of its "peculiar institution." The iniquitous measures submitted to the National Legislature from time to time, and the subsequent action upon them, together with notable occurrences at Washington and elsewhere illustrating the spirit and purpose of the slaveholders and their abettors,—such as the Mexican War, the Fugitive Slave Law, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the Border Ruffian Invasion of Kansas, the assault upon Massachusetts' honored senator, Charles Sumner, etc., created no little excitement here as in other localities, and, to a certain extent, prepared the citizens and all concerned for the crisis that at length was forced upon the country in 1861, transferring the question at issue from the arena of polemics to the field of carnal strife, and committing its final disposition to the "arbitrament of the sword." Only once, however, in addition to the instance referred to, did the town, as such, take action in regard to what was transpiring in this behalf, and put itself on record thereupon for all coming time.





At the annual meeting in 1854, while the so-called Kansas-Nebraska Bill was pending in Congress with strong indications of its ultimate passage, upon the recommendation of a committee consisting of Joel Merriam, Jr., John Minott, and Joseph M. Whitman, chosen to consider the matter and report, the citizens

*"Resolved, That we, the legal voters of Westminster in Town Meeting held Mar. 6, 1854, do most solemnly protest against the Bill now before Congress to give Territorial Governments to Nebraska and Kansas."*

The reasons for this protest were declared to be, (1) That the bill proposed to annul a solemn treaty which had been made with certain tribes of Indians who had moved from the homes of their nativity east of the Mississippi to those territories, under a promise that they should remain in peaceful possession of them as long as a remnant of them existed, which was in violation of every sense of right and justice; and (2) That the involved repeal of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, so far as related to the prohibiting of slavery north of 36° 30', was in direct violation of a solemn compact between the North and the South. The town clerk was instructed to forward a copy of the resolution, with the reasons appended, to each of our (Mass.) Senators and Representatives in Washington.

Subsequently to this occurrence, the moral conflict between freedom and slavery went on as before, until the breaking out of the Rebellion,—in fact, until amid the flames of civil war and the thunders of the battlefield, the Commander-in-chief, President Lincoln, issued his immortal "Proclamation of Emancipation," striking the fetters from the limbs of the enslaved and setting every captive free,—an act upon which he very properly invoked "the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

**Peace.** The spirit of human brotherhood, which gave birth to the great reformatory movements just considered, is the fruitful source of other causes having in their keeping the progress and well-being of the race. Especially does it prompt to efforts for the promotion of "Peace on earth and good will to men," involving the ultimate overthrow of the mighty war system of the world,—a system which Rev. Robert Hall, a distinguished English clergyman, declared to be "a temporary repeal of all the principles of virtue," and the celebrated American divine, Rev. William Ellery Channing, D. D., "the worst vestige of barbarism and the grossest outrage upon the principles of Christianity." Through the consecrated labors of such men as Rev. Noah Worcester, D. D., and Howard Malcolm, D. D., Hon. William Jay, and George C. Beckwith, much interest in this reform was awakened throughout the general community early in this century, resulting at length in the formation of the American Peace Society and other organizations, for the purpose of disseminating the principles of peace, quickening the





spirit of reciprocity and unity among the nations, and helping to hasten on the time when "men should learn war no more."

The town of Westminster felt the impulse of this movement, and a goodly number of persons professed themselves in sympathy with it, and desirous of helping to realize the ends it had in view. Sincere believers in Christianity, seeing how difficult it is to reconcile the slaughter and horror of the battlefield with the loving precepts of the Gospel, and those committed to other humanitarian enterprises, recognizing the bond that unites all causes calculated to bless the world "and make the sum of human sorrows less," were constrained to acknowledge the claims of this great philanthropy, and to avow themselves in some sense or other its friends and supporters. To be sure the "War of the Rebellion" came in to show that even this so-called Christian nation was not Christian enough to obey the Master's precepts in the settlement of important questions of public policy, and to chill the ardor, if not to destroy the faith, of many of the friends of peace; yet is it to be believed and hoped that something of the former abhorrence of the wholesale slaughter of man by man still remains, something of the old-time desire for the reign of "peace and good will" among the nations—for the coming of the promised era of brotherhood and love.

Other reforms, too, have had their adherents here—those ready to confess and urge their claims. Among them that of *Woman's Higher Education and Complete Enfranchisement* has held an important place; a reform rising to ever-increasing prominence with the onward march of time, and destined to universal recognition in years not very far ahead. And so with others still, that can not in this connection be named. Here, as all through the land and all over the world, the spirit of improvement more or less pervades the air and animates the hearts of the people. The result sooner or later must be the righting of old wrongs, the overcoming of existing evils, the overthrow of strongly-intrenched systems of oppression and cruelty—a larger liberty and a nobler, truer life, for individuals, for society, and for all mankind.

**Foreign Missions.** Early in the present century a deep interest was awakened among the various churches of New England in the work of extending the benefits and blessings of the Gospel of Christ to so-called pagan nations in the far-off portions of the earth. It pervaded, to a considerable extent, the more humanely religious portion of the community here, and found expression in practical efforts to promote the objects which it sought to serve. Under the leadership of Mr. Mann, a monthly concert in aid of the cause of missions was established in the church of which he was pastor, and remains unto this day constant in its efforts to advance the kingdom of God in foreign lands.



As a result of the early enthusiasm in this behalf, three of the daughters of the town consecrated themselves to the work involved and entered into active service in the mission field—two of them giving up their lives a willing sacrifice on the altar of their faith and love. The first of these in the order of time, was Myra, daughter of Col. Abel and Phebe (Holden) Wood, born Dec. 7, 1800. She married May 28, 1827, Rev. David O. Allen of Princeton, who had engaged to go to India under the auspices of the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," and ten days later they set sail for Bombay. Stopping for a month on their way at Calcutta, they reached their place of destination, Nov. 28th, and commenced at once their labors. Mrs. Allen gave herself unreservedly to the work she felt called upon of God to do, as evinced in her frequent letters to her friends at home, which were full of tender love, devout feeling, and grateful joy. After a time, her health became seriously impaired, but she recovered, resuming her duties and discharging them with unfaltering diligence and zeal. In the midst of them she was stricken down with a suddenly fatal blow, the same day witnessing her first attack, her death, and her burial. At 6.30 o'clock on the morning of Feb. 5, 1831, she gave birth to a son, Myron W. Allen, with no signs of serious consequences, but an unforeseen change soon occurred, terminating her life three hours later, her funeral being held at 5 p. m. A memoir of her life, forming a volume of some three hundred pages, was prepared by Rev. Mr. Mann, and published by the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society—an appreciative tribute to a pure and lofty spirit and a consecrated life.

The second of the missionaries alluded to was Mary, daughter of Jacob and Mary (Rice) Sawyer, born Sept. 14, 1814. Having obtained an education in the common school, at Westminster Academy, and the Charlestown Female Seminary, she married Sept. 9, 1835, William C. Jackson, a native of Eaton, N. H., a former principal of the Academy, and a recent graduate of Andover Theological Seminary. On the 5th of December they set sail for the missionary field in Asiatic Turkey. Tarrying a few months at Constantinople, they then went to Trebizond on the southeast shore of the Black sea, where they remained at their chosen work about three years. Thence they were transferred to Erzeroom, 150 miles distant in a northeast direction, laboring there some six years. Mrs. Jackson's health giving way in the spring of 1844, the result of causes incident to a life of privation and trial among a semi-barbarous people, they resolved, after a year of great suffering on her part with no prospect of relief, to return home, which they did, arriving at Boston, Dec. 5, 1845. Since then they have resided in Lincoln, Dunstable, and Brentwood, N. H., in which places Mr. Jackson has been settled as Congregational (Trinitarian) minister. He relinquished pastoral labors in 1881, but continued to reside in





Brentwood some nine years, when they removed to Newton, their present home. Mrs. Jackson has been much of an invalid since returning from Turkey, nearly half of the time confined to her bed, and so unable to be active in Christian work, but her aim has ever been "to do what she could," illustrating the spirit of virtue, humanity, and piety, in a worthy, useful, and noble life.

Catharine Wood, cousin of Myra, was daughter of Ezra and Katy (Jackson) Wood, born Dec. 17, 1817. In August, 1839, she married Rev. Samuel H. Walcott, then of Jacksonville, Ill., and a few months later went with him to Syria, there to engage in missionary labors as his associate and helper. They were stationed at Beiroot, where she sickened and died after about two years of active, self-denying service. She was much beloved and greatly lamented, and left a fragrant, blessed memory behind her. Her husband subsequently returned to America, married again, was settled at Providence, R. I., Cleveland, Ohio, and elsewhere, and was honored with the title of D. D. He had twelve children, of whom one, the Hon. Edward O. Walcott, is at present U. S. Senator from Colorado.

It is but proper and just to note the fact that, for some years after the war, the church to which these missionaries in foreign fields belonged, true to the anti-slavery sentiment characterizing it in previous days and a corresponding regard for the colored race, supported, wholly or in part, a teacher among the freedmen of the South, Miss Martha L. Boutelle of Leominster, whose labors, educationally and religiously, were crowned with much success, eliciting warm commendation from Gen. O. O. Howard, former head of the Freedman's Bureau, at Washington, D. C., and well known, not only for his soldierly qualities, but for his high character as a man and an American citizen. The same kind of missionary work in the home field has been carried on, or substantially aided, by other agencies and activities in town, in the interest of a common humanity and for the welfare and enduring prosperity of the Republic.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### DOMESTIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS.

#### LIFE IN THE OLDEN TIME—TENDENCIES AND TRANSFORMATIONS— ABANDONED HOMESTEADS.

BEFORE bringing these chronicles to a close, it seems desirable to devote a few pages to a portraiture of the common, everyday life of our forefathers and foremothers, for the purpose of presenting clearly to view some of the practices and customs prevailing among them and indicating the conditions and circumstances under which they laid the foundations and built up the superstructure of this goodly town. Such a sketch will open the way to a consideration of some of the tendencies of modern civilization and the great changes resulting therefrom in the domestic and social economy of the people at large, during the past hundred and fifty years.

Sufficient has already been said to show that the first comers here and their immediate descendants and successors, were not only profoundly religious men and women attending scrupulously to all the forms and ordinances of church life, but that they were also highly moral—honest, upright, good-principled, kind-hearted, and humane—faithful to their obligations in the various relations of life. They were, moreover, enterprising, industrious, frugal, temperate, ready and willing to work hard, endure privation, and practice a rigid self-denial, in order to build a home for themselves and their children and establish a township rich in blessings for coming generations. No doubt some unscrupulous, graceless fellows, and, now and then, a thriftless, disorderly family, were found among them; but these were exceptions and not the rule, the great body of the men and women being of genuine character and worthy of remembrance and grateful commendation.

They were furthermore, generally speaking, persons of intelligence, power of thought, and executive ability, well-qualified to be the pioneers in the important enterprise that they were here to promote. Of what goes by the name of culture,—book-learning, the equipment furnished by the schools,—they undoubtedly had little, but they had what served them in good stead therefor, sturdy common sense, sound judgment, and a practical knowledge of men and of affairs. They had, at the same time, a sense of the value of education as a prime factor in human character and in the social fabric, and early began to



make provision for securing its blessings to the community, as elsewhere narrated.

They were disposed to be watchful of the public morals and sought diligently to keep the township free from those social vices which imperil all sacred interests and dishonor both God and man. They guarded well the portals of the settlement, to prevent, as far as possible, persons of questionable character from coming in; they maintained a vigilant oversight of all strolling, transient visitors here; they held each other and especially all heads of families to a strict account for the conduct and influence of whomsoever they might entertain as guests or inmates of their homes.

The dwellings of the first settlers were small, rude, and, in many respects, uncomfortable. Probably, many of them were simple log cabins, although, it is said, the first ones occupied were framed and covered with rough boards from the already existing sawmill. They had often but one room, with an attic overhead reached by a ladder, and this served the needs of the family, sometimes numbering a dozen or more persons. The single-roomed house was soon superseded by one of two apartments, with a small entry and a large chimney between. To the accommodations thus furnished was added, subsequently, a long room in the rear, devoted to all the ordinary purposes of domestic life, with a smaller one at each end for incidental uses. This style of dwelling prevailed largely during the latter part of the last century, and some well-known specimens of it are still to be found. In its final form as a typical farmhouse, it had two stories in front and one in the rear, and was covered by a common, double roof, the two sides of which were of very unequal length. Other styles of residences came in at a later day, most of those now seen within the memory of many yet alive. As a needful accompaniment of the old-time dwelling, the high-curved well was in its yard, having a long and lofty "sweep" *above*, wherewith to draw water from the cool depths *below*.

The furnishings of the house in those days were as rude and inartistic as the building itself. No carpet was on the floor and no pictures adorned the walls. Chairs were conspicuous by their absence, their places being filled with stools or boxes, or, perchance, a section from the trunk of a forest tree. A table of the most primitive pattern usually occupied the center of the common or living room, which served alike for kitchen, dining room, reception hall, parlor, not infrequently for a dormitory, and sometimes as a shop for the manufacture of brooms, noggins, pails, and other small articles of household or other use. Nearly every such apartment had a "settle"—a long bench or plain settee with a high back, on which half a dozen persons could be seated when occasion required. This occupied a prominent position on one side of the huge fireplace, in which wood four feet long could be burned, and from which, ablaze with







W. P. ALLEN, GARDNER, MASS.

OLD WHITNEY HOUSE.  
RESIDENCE OF CALVIN WHITNEY.



backlog, forestick, etc., there was dispensed in the winter time heat and sometimes light for all that were in the room. A birch broom to keep the floor free from litter, graced one corner, while against the chimney jamb stood the uncouth "shovel and tongs," wherewith to adjust the falling brands by day, or closely pack and cover them for the night.

Nearly every house was supplied with the paraphernalia needful for the production of the cloth out of which garments, blankets, and other articles were made for the household,—hatchels, cardboards, spinning wheels, reels, warping bars, looms, etc. So also was it with utensils needed in culinary operations,—mortar and pestle, bread trough, trays, piggins, jacks and spits, pots and kettles, gridirons, skillets, frying pans, hooks and trammels, tin kitchens, and the like. What served for cooking and table appliances in those days consisted mostly of wooden plates, bowls, and spoons, with a few articles of pewter ware, several earthen mugs, and a small assortment of knives and forks. These were arranged with considerable regard for order and good taste, upon a series of shelves at one end of the living room, familiarly known as "the dresser." Stoves had not been invented, and the cooking was done before or over the large, open fire, or in the spacious brick oven close by, where the principal baking for the entire week could be accomplished in a single day.

The diet of our ancestors was as simple as it was unadulterated and healthful. It consisted largely of wild game and fish, supplemented by the flesh of domestic beasts and fowls. The potato was hardly known. Corn, rye, and barley were the principal cereals used, and turnips, parsnips, pumpkins, peas, and beans, the leading vegetables. "Bean porridge" was the staple dish in many families, and is said to have been palatable and nutritious at any time, but "best when nine days old." Nuts, roots, and berries, nature's freewill offering, in their season, helped to give variety as well as volume to the "bill of fare." But little tea was used, and coffee had hardly a place in the culinary vocabulary. In their place were certain indigenous plants, the raspberry, Labrador tea, etc., from which an acceptable beverage was sometimes made, as there was from roasted barley. Cider from the orchards, and beer from wild roots and herbs, were common drinks in most households. Spirituous liquors of a severer type came into use at a later date.

The dress of the men and women of whom mention is made was, no doubt, primitive and unique. Simple "homespun" was the material composing it, as it was homewoven, too, for the most part; and as the garments themselves were homemade. Wool from black sheep and white, properly combined, gave a checked dress which pleased the taste of the mother and her daughters, while deftly mixed they furnished an equally satisfactory gray suit for the father and sons. If other colors were





wanted, either for woolen goods or for those produced from home-grown hemp or flax, they were derived, not from Central American forests, nor from mineral deposits of any sort, but from trees and shrubs native to the soil. Now and then some article of the wardrobe, made of calico or other goods of foreign production, could be found among the better-to-do families, an object of interest and admiration, if not of envy, to the beholders.

Of the kinds and styles of garments then in vogue, no detailed and definite statement can be made. A skirt with short, loose gown is said to have been the ordinary dress of the women, while the men wore short trowsers, called "breeches," with a jacket, and a long blouse or frock over all. The Sunday suit for both sexes was more comely and attractive, though by no means elegant or artistic, according to modern standards.

The equipment of the farm for the cultivation of the soil, etc., was mostly of the farmer's own manufacture, supplemented sometimes by the skill of the common blacksmith. The various implements were clumsy in form and crude in construction, heavy and unwieldy,—a very coarse type or intimation of the light, shapely, easily handled apparatus of the present day. The multiform kinds of machinery, strictly so-called, which have revolutionized agriculture as an art or calling in life, had not then been invented.

Means of conveyance in the early days here were few in number and primitive in character. Aside from the use of the natural powers of locomotion, horseback riding was the principal method of traveling about town or journeying abroad. Sidesaddles for the women, and pillions for both women and children, were common, and it was not infrequently the case that a man, his wife, and one or more little ones would be seen mounted upon the same patient, willing, burden-bearing beast, on their way to meeting or a distant neighbor's house,—a picturesque spectacle! Few wheeled vehicles were in town, a hundred years ago, save those of the coarsest, clumsiest make for farmer's convenience, and the introduction of comfortable, attractive wagons and pleasure carriages of any sort is a matter that comes within the memory of some now living.

As to amusements, these people were not without them, as is sometimes supposed—not without something to relieve the tedium and dullness of what might seem to be the monotony and barrenness of their lot. Possibly they were as well supplied with the means of merrymaking, according to their desires or conscious needs, as are those of us who now occupy the places left vacant by them. To be sure, they had no clubs, cattle fairs, improvement society meetings, musical entertainments, etc., but they had trainings, wrestlings, raisings, huskings, apple bees, quiltings, etc., for adults, while the children indulged in their little games of "tag," "hide and seek," "hunt the



slipper," and "button, button, who's got the button," much as their successors of the same age do now.

Moreover, neighborhood visitation and the friendly intercourse of social life were then of that free and unconventional character which affords some of the purest, sweetest, and most satisfying pleasures of life. Class distinctions were practically unknown, all the people occupying a common level of rank and honor, sharing together the fortunes of their lot as members of one household of faith and of one school of hardship, toil, and self-sacrifice, in which the good fortune and happiness of one became the joy of all.

Furthermore, these people believed most heartily that they were engaged in a great and noble work. They felt that the blessing of heaven would rest upon their labors. In such an assurance there is always satisfaction and delight. And besides, after a little, they were prospered in what they sought to do. The settlement was filling up, the rough places were made smooth, and the waste places fruitful,—the wilderness and solitary place was made glad before their eyes, and in these results there was abundant cause for rejoicing. So that, looking at the matter in a large and appreciative way, it is more than probable that the lot of these ancestors of ours was not so cheerless and forbidding as might at first thought be supposed, and they, themselves, not the long-faced, gloomy, disconsolate folk we sometimes take them to have been. Very likely life had as much zest, as much relish, as much real enjoyment to them as it has to us, their pleasure-ridden descendants. Their privations had their compensations, their losses were not without gains, and some honey they were able to extract from the carcass of the lion they were called upon to meet in their path, vanquish, and destroy.

In picturing to our thought the life of the community as it was in the olden time, the conditions and circumstances under which our fathers and mothers labored in their day, we are reminded of the very great changes, mostly for the better, which have taken place since they were the actors in the drama of this town's affairs, and how different everything in the domestic and social economy of to-day is from what it was then. We are living in a new era of history, in a new age of the world,—an era and an age made possible to us by their labors, by the fidelity and conscientious zeal with which they met the responsibilities and discharged the duties that, in the Providence of God and the progress of civilization, were laid upon them.

The germs of the changes referred to, the seed-grain of all the advancement that has been made since the days spoken of, existed among the people of that early time. Their personal character, the principles of civil and religious liberty they cherished and honored, the form of social and civil life they established and illustrated here, their faith and piety, their hope of





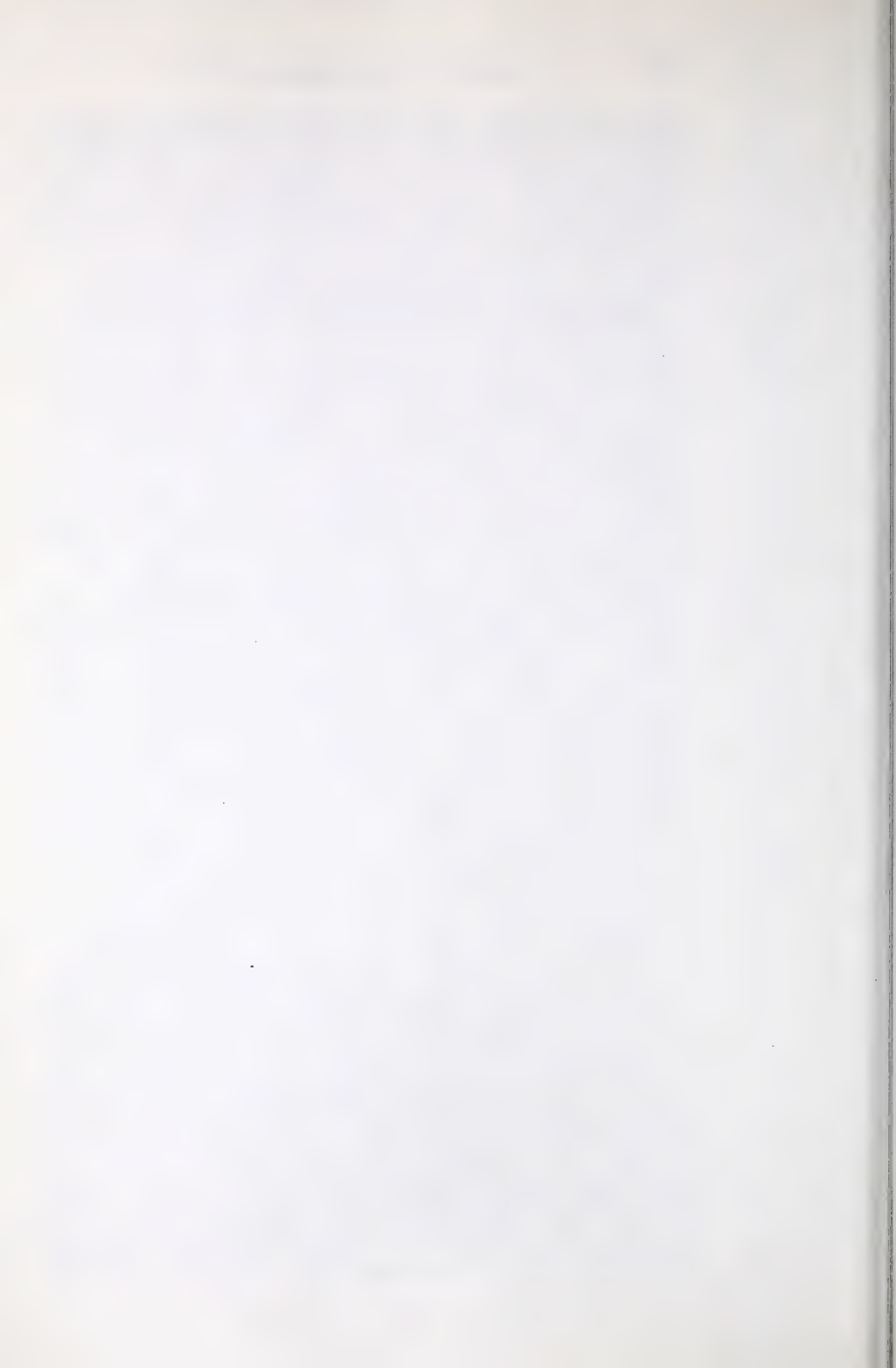
better days to come, were well calculated to generate tendencies and activities which could result only in greatly improved social conditions, in a higher form of civilization, in the better life of the present day. So it is that "they labored and we entered into their labors"; so it is that they sowed the seed of harvests that nourish and sustain our lives; so it is that we received from them a precious inheritance, which, God grant, we may transmit enriched and augmented to coming generations.

**Distribution of Population.** A marked feature of the transformation which has taken place in the domestic and social life of the township during the period intervening between the olden times and the present, has been but incidentally alluded to in the presentation thus far given, and deserves a more extended notice. It pertains to the general distribution of the inhabitants of the town throughout its territory, and to the centralizing tendency which assumed a definite, practical form about a century ago, resulting in the gradual growth of the several villages now existing, and in the accompanying depopulation and desertion of large districts, once the seat of flourishing homesteads and of worthy and influential families.

It was the prevailing custom, if not the definite policy, of the first settlers in town, for each proprietor of a house lot to locate upon it and devote himself largely to its improvement and cultivation. Under this regime, nearly every one of the sixty-acre tracts laid out in the first division of lands had a resident owner upon it, and the same was to a large extent true of those of the second division. Naturally some lots would be unsuitable for homestead uses, while others would be added to neighboring lots, to enlarge the landed estate of certain settlers who had the means of purchase at their command. As a rule, however, each lot came to have an occupant, and the population was distributed far and wide throughout the township.

And this state of things continued until near the close of the last century, when the work of centralization began. The Revolutionary War being over, and the questions incident to the founding of the state and national governments being settled, the energies of the people were turned into other channels and expended upon other objects. A spirit of enterprise and of improvement sprang up in all directions, manifesting itself in the establishment of various kinds of manufactures, in the opening of important thoroughfares, and in the multiplication of other instrumentalities and facilities for supplying the growing wants of the community. In the line of the increased activity of the times, the water power of the "Narrows" and of other parts of the town was developed and utilized; the Fifth Massachusetts Turnpike was built, furnishing more easy and abundant communication with prosperous settlements to the west, and with growing markets to the east; a hotel and several new stores were erected and opened on the "Main





street," for the accommodation of the traveling public and of adjoining localities; several men of energy, business capacity, and public spirit from abroad came in to augment existing forces here; and withal a season of unprecedented prosperity prevailed. An increase of business at the Center attracted residents from the outside as time went on, while the rise of important industries in neighboring towns, the founding of manufacturing villages in more distant places, the opening of new fields of activity at the West and elsewhere, all offering inducements and attractions superior to those of the rocky, obdurate farms, had the effect of gradually depleting the outlying districts, and of giving up many once well-tilled fields and farms to pasturage or forest growths.

So great have been the changes thus indicated that many names once familiar here, and representing large families, such as Brooks, Graves, Heywood, Hoar, Taylor, are no longer to be found; while others, like Holden, Miller, Sawin, Whitney, and Wood, though remaining, yet appear in greatly diminished numbers. Only a few estates continue in the families of those who first occupied and improved them,—a dozen, or fifteen at most,—while the great majority of them, by reason of the mutations incident to every condition of life, and other considerations of a more distinctly financial character, have been sold and resold many times. All of which appears more fully in the following tabulated statement concerning

#### ABANDONED HOMESTEADS.

A striking feature of the territory of the town at the present day, resulting from causes set forth in the last few paragraphs, is the appearance, here and there in all directions, of old cellars, wells, orchards, or other tokens of dwellings once existing but now gone forever. Some of these have so recently been removed, or given over to decay, that their ownership and occupancy, in latter years at least, are well known to the generation now on the stage of active life, while many others there are so long vacated that all traces of those once in possession of them have been lost, or are preserved only in vague and uncertain traditions or in the fast fading memory of the older inhabitants. To rescue all of them from oblivion and place them in their proper relation to the continually changing life of the community and township, considerable time and effort have been expended in looking up the history of these forsaken localities and in tracing their descent from the beginning to the end of their existence as places of residence. Nearly every one of the sites of former homesteads within the town's borders has been visited by the writer, and they are spoken of from personal observation as well as by personal research among authentic records and annals. A very few instances occur in which no indications whatever can now be found of buildings known to have once existed, as will be noted in proper time and place.

For the purpose of making this review more intelligible and of fixing in the mind of the reader more permanently the various localities described, they are numbered in regular order, each number having its corresponding one on the map of the township to be found at the beginning of the volume. It is not claimed that the places thus indicated are mathematically correct, though they are deemed sufficiently so for all practical purposes and to serve



the general ends for which they are designed. It will be noted that the tabulated record begins at the extreme northerly part of the territory, proceeding thence southward by indirect advances, as convenience or fancy dictates, until the entire ground is covered and the opposite limit reached. Possibly the list is incomplete, but the number of omissions, if any, is very small indeed. The designation "Abandoned Homesteads" is used in a somewhat restricted sense, inasmuch as in some instances it is made to apply to the giving up of a dwelling site on a lot or farm for a more eligible or desirable one on the same domain, if considerably removed from the original. If the change were inconsiderable—of a few rods only—no notice is taken of it. So far by way of explanation. The abbreviations and contractions in the sketches given, will be readily apprehended.

No. 1. In the extreme north part of the town, seemingly on 2d Div., lot No. 112. Was purchased by Mark Cutter, in 1823, of Samuel Gibson of Fg., the house, barn, etc., then standing upon it. Mr. C. was in town in 1815 and prob. erected the buildings afterward occupied and finally owned by him. Subsequently to his death, about 1848, the family moved away. Several other parties resided there temporarily, afterwards, but the house disappeared many years since and nothing now remains, save the cellar and a few other tokens of what was once a well-appointed homestead.

No. 2. Situated half a mile north of the present residence of James H. Laws, on what was originally No. 41, 2d Div. It was the home of Isaac Brooks, who, coming from Acton in 1770, purchased land, erected a dwelling, etc., and spent his life there. After his death the buildings went to decay and at length disappeared, some years since.

No. 3. The residence of Samuel Brooks, son of Isaac, situated ab. 50 rods from the county road, on the town-way leading to his father's. A mill built by him is still standing. (See Chap. on Industries.)

No. 4. A small house once stood between the dwelling of Samuel Cooper (now A. S. North's) and the old Martin (Chesmore) place. It was once occupied by Wm. S. Bradbury, Benjamin Tilden, etc. Prob. owned by Mr. Cooper.

No. 5. Located on lot 39, 2d Div., in what is now an open field half a mile northwest of Mr. Laws'. The dwelling was prob. built by Jacob Harris, who bought the land of Samuel Kendall, O. P., in 1767, and who sold it, with house and improvements, to Jona. Brooks, Fg., 10 yrs. later. In 1779 Mr. Brooks sold to Jedh. Cooper. Only transients lived there afterwards and the buildings gradually went to decay.

No. 6. In 1772, Jacob Goodale, from Southboro', bought of David McIntire, lot No. 5, 3d Div., and is supposed to have built a house upon it, which he occupied some 8 or 10 years and then left town. No corresponding cellar-hole or other token of a habitation has been found. But there exist certain indefinite remembrances of such, centering in a former Flint pasture, which lies N. W. of the schoolhouse in old District No. 6. This location is confirmed by the fact that the first schoolhouse in that part of the town, built in 1784 was ordered to be placed "on a ridge of land near Mr. Milens house"—Mr. Milen (Millen) being the assumed successor of Mr. Goodale on the estate.

No. 7. In the Nichols pasture, on the north side of the cross road leading from near where Porter F. Page lives to the valley, a few rods from the river, are there indications of the former residence of Thos. G. Cree, who was in town but a few years. His house was prob. little more than a rude hut and soon disappeared.

No. 8. Half a mile east of the main highway over B. P. hill, at the end of a lane still traceable, are there the cellar, well, etc., which mark the site of the buildings of the large estate originally belonging to Jonathan Townsend, but sold by him to Nathl. Sawyer, from Reading, ab. 1773. Mr. S. lived there till his decease and was succeeded by his son Eli, who sold





to his son-in-law, Joseph Burgess. The house was burned more than 50 yrs. ago, and the barn, in 1876.

No. 9. Some 50 rods in front of the Smyrna Whitney house on B. P. hill, are there evident signs of a former dwelling and accompanying farm buildings presumed to have been built by Darius Sawyer, who came to town from Lanc. about 1770. He conveyed the estate to his brother-in-law, Joseph Gerry of L. and John Darby of W., the following year, but prob. continued to occupy it some time afterward. It was sold to Samuel Whitney, Jr., father of Smyrna, in 1778. He soon located upon it, remaining there till the large house upon the present highway was erected, ab. the year 1800, when he removed thither. Elisha Train, and perhaps others, subsequently lived there. It seems to have been a part of lot 65, 2d Div. A road running from near the dwelling of the late S. Newell Barnes to the Nathl. Sawyer place just mentioned, passed by the site.

No. 10. Half a mile eastwardly from the last mentioned locality are there similar tokens (unvisited) of an old family residence. One David Pratt bought lands of Dr. Zachariah Harvey ab. 1770, and, after erecting buildings, resided there till 1778, when he sold to S. Whitney, Jr., and left town. Other occupants, if any, unknown.

No. 11. Many persons now living remember the farm buildings formerly standing on the hill aforesaid, at the corner where the road leading to Mr. Robinson's leaves the main highway. They were erected by Josiah Wheeler, Jr., early in the present century, and occupied by him till his decease in 1851, and by his son, Newell R., who d. in 1853. The estate afterward passed into the possession of S. F. Towne. He lived there till the buildings were burned under somewhat suspicious circumstances in 1862. The Ins. Co. refused to pay the insurance money, and the owner did not see fit to urge his claim for it before the courts.

No. 12. Half a mile N. W. of the last, in the Cowee pasture, so called, there are plainly visible an old cellar, well, and orchard. The lot thus marked was No. 3, 2d Div., which was sold, in 1770, by Wm. Bemis to Eli Keyes of Shrewsbury. He erected the house and made other improvements, but soon disposed of the property to Timothy Lewis of Reading, who res. there several yrs. In 1777 it came into the possession of Silas Whitney, bro. of Saml., Jr., who, early the following year, disposed of it to James Cohee. His son, James, Jr., lived there awhile, the last resident perhaps.

No. 13. Still farther to the N. W., near Mud Pond, there once lived Joshua Mellen and family in a house, the cellar of which is said to be still visible. A public road to the premises was laid out, in 1776, from the last named place. Who were the first residents on the lot is not known, nor who followed Mr. Mellen.

No. 14. Some distance beyond the present E. T. Smith place on Bragg Hill, is the site of the former house of Benjamin Lynde, father of the present John Lynde. A Mr. Lynde, perhaps father of Benj., occupied the premises in 1796. Prob. he was the builder of the house. Matthias Mosman lived there early in the century, and Abel Mosman, bro. of Samuel, Sen., at a later day.

No. 15. In the same neighborhood, possibly near the site occupied more recently by the Kendall barn, lived one Josiah Shattuck, 1766-1774, no memorials of whose dwelling house are known to exist. The first road to that part of the town was laid out by his residence.

No. 16. This was the Capt. Aaron Bolton homestead, located a short distance N. of the Jonas Winship, Jr., place, now owned by Leonard Smith. Long since abandoned.

No. 17. Still farther north was the site of the dwelling of Stephen Holden, Jr., on lot No. 53, 2d Div., owned by him and by his son Jonas afterward. It was sold to Nahum Barrell in 1829, who erected new buildings



near where the original ones stood. Of late years it has been in possession of John Carr. The buildings were destroyed by fire Aug. 30, 1887.

No. 18. On the E. side of the road to So. Ashm., near the town line, once stood a dwelling house, the tokens of which are now wholly obliterated. It was the home of David Maynard, who was in town 1772, and is sup. to have been built by him. His son John lived there awhile, selling the place in 1803 to Luther Barrell, Sen., from Hingham, at whose d. it passed into the hands of Luther, Jr., who settled on the adjoining lot, and who caused the buildings to be removed.

No. 19. Half a mile N. E. of the last, on the cross road to Ashm. Center, there was a dwelling a hundred years ago, supposed to have been erected by Oliver Whitcomb, a resident in town before 1780. It was owned or occupied successively by him, Caleb Wilder, Thomas Keyes, and perhaps others, before being left to final decay. Tokens of its exact site have been sought for but not found.

No. 20. S. W. of, and adjoining the Maynard-Barrell farm just referred to, was 2d Div., lot No. 90, once a flourishing homestead, the dwelling, whose site is easily determined, standing on the west side of the river. It belonged originally to Joseph Lynde, who sold it to Benj. Howard of Holden. His son Benj. conveyed it to Isaac Blodgett of Ashm., who built upon it and spent his life there. He d. 1824, leaving the property to his son, Elias, who decd. the following year. Subsequent owners and occupants not ascertained. The buildings long since disappeared.

No. 21. Some 75 rods back of the residence of the late James Puffer, now J. F. Kellon's, on the high lands, there is a well, etc., marking the site of the farm buildings of Nathl. Kezar, who erected them ab. 1770, occupying them till 1776, when he sold to Jona. Sawyer. Only transient tenants of Mr. S. prob. lived there afterwards. The lot was No. 58, 2d Div., owned successively by David Dunster, Ezra Houghton, Lanc., N. Kezar, J. Sawyer, etc.

No. 22. Opp. the residence of Mr. Kellon just named, formerly stood that of John Whitney, 2d (so called), father of Wilber F. of So. Ashburnham, built by him in 1832, and destroyed by fire in 1856.

No. 23. About three-fourths of a mile S. E. of the last, on the same road, nearly opp. where the one to No. Common branches off, are the remains of a cellar. A part of lot No. 118, 2d Div., was bought of Josiah Cutting in 1783, by Ephm. Pike, who erected a house in which he lived some ten yrs., selling to Samuel Taylor from Reading, the next occupant. From him the estate passed to his son-in-law, James Bruce, who was succeeded by John Boynton, and perhaps others.

No. 24. Half a mile N. E. of the residence of the late S. Newell Barnes, on an old cellar now visible, once stood a house built possibly by Joshua Mellen bef. 1777, in which year he mortgaged the property to John Brooks. In 1780 he sold to Elisha Whitney, who lived there till ab. 1800, when the estate was conveyed by him to his nephew, Jonas W. Whitney. The last resident owner is sup. to have been Lorey Barnes, who sold to Francis Curtis in 1812. Prob. occupied by transient tenants afterwards.

No. 25. Just below the R. R. crossing, on the E. side of the road leading from No. Common to Scrabble Hollow, formerly stood the dwelling house of John Monroe and others. It was destroyed by fire some 50 years ago.

No. 26. Farther northward, almost to the bridge on the west side of the road, was formerly a small house owned and occupied by Samuel Mosman, Jr., and possibly others.

No. 27. On the road from the Hollow to Beech Hill, on the north side near what is known as Benton's crossing, the cellar being still visible, lived Isaac Wetherbee for some years, and also Charles G. Griffin. The house on this place was burned.





No. 28. Near the last was the residence of Levi Richardson, perhaps first occupied by him. The dwelling was destroyed by fire, and a new house was erected on the site by Joel W. Benton, after whom the R. R. crossing close by was named. Possibly there were other residents.

No. 29. A few rods south of the Noah May, now Charles S. Smith, place, on the road to No. Common, stood the house of Vinal S. Dunn, on a part of lot No. 76, 2d Div., sold by Jonas W. Whitney to Dolly Dunn in 1822. The building was rem. many yrs. ago.

No. 30. Tokens of an old homestead may be seen in an open lot some quarter of a mile W. of the former Edw. Jackson, Jr., now Joseph Seaver, residence. There lived Abner Miles as the first occupant. Dying in 1778, the estate passed to his son, Trowbridge, who sold it to his cousins, Edwd. and John Jackson, one of whom prob. occupied the house for a time bef. it finally went to decay.

No. 31. The 2d Div., lot No. 31, lying W. of the present Eugene Gates place on Beech Hill, was originally drawn by a Mr. Pemberton of Boston. Passing through several hands, it came into possession of Thomas Wetherbee of Stow in 1778, who built a house thereon in which he lived till 1801, when he sold to his son Caleb and Jeremiah Wood. From them it passed to Henry Coolidge, and thence to Ezra Derby, who, it is supposed, res. there many years. It was subsequently owned by Joel Derby, then by Oliver Estey, and was occupied by various families while the buildings stood.

No. 32. In 1768 Isaac A. Green from Mendon bought lot No. 33, 2d Div., adjoining the last, and prob. erected buildings on it and resided there till 1776, selling at that date to Samuel Fessenden, who, in 1795, re-sold to Jonas White of Waltham, the last permanent occupant. It originally belonged to Thomas Merriam of Lexington, and was owned, improved, and possibly occupied, for a brief period, by his son David, who afterwards settled in Hubn.

No. 33. As early as 1762 Jacob Emerson was living on 2d Div., lot No. 35, the second one W. of the last, and was succeeded by Ezra Penniman of Braintree, perhaps bro. of Wm., who bought the place in 1795. The site of the dwelling house has not been found.

No. 34. In 1759 Nathl. Eaton of Reading bought of Richard Newton No. 43, 3d. Div., upon which he erected buildings, and occupied them soon after with his family. He was succeeded by his son Nathan, well remembered by the older inhabitants. The cellar, etc., may be seen at the end of the cart-way leading northward from the residence of his grandson Nathaniel.

No. 35. Half a mile N. W. of the last named site, on a commanding height overlooking a wide extent of country, formerly stood the spacious dwelling house of Elisha Pierce. After his decease, in 1858, it was owned and occupied by Geo. K. Ray, and perhaps others, till 1887, when it was burned.

No. 36. In the pasture lying between the late residence of Lyman Allen, now F. M. Poor's, and that of A. F. Green, may be seen evidences of an old building site. It was the home of Josiah Stearns, the grandfather of the late widow of Thomas Merriam. He settled there ab. 1760, remaining a few years and selling to Daniel Hoar. From him the property passed through his son, Stephen, to his daughter, Rebecca (Holden) Brown, who is thought to have been the last resident on the premises. A public school was once kept in the house.

No. 37. In the large field opposite the residence of Geo. W. Whitney, on the N. W. slope of the hill, is the site, now easily recognized, of the original dwelling of Josiah Cutting, the first occupant of lot No. 45. His estate finally included lot No. 44, on which the house of his present successor was built in 1823.

No. 38. In an open field some 50 or 60 rds. S. E. of the just mentioned house, is a well, with other indications of a former dwelling near by. These





mark the spot on lot No. 43, 1st Div., where John Brooks had settled in 1751, and where Benjamin Butterfield located about 1755, remaining some 8 yrs., when he left for Vt. He sold to Elijah Gibbs. How long Mr. G. occupied is not known. The estate, or a portion of it, rem. in possession of the Gibbs family till 1817, when it was conveyed to Abner Whitney, gd. father of Geo. W.

No. 39. Evident indications of an old homestead may be seen in the Bigelow pasture, so called, some twenty rods back of the house of C. B. Cooley. The dwelling which stood there was erected by Samuel Gibbs, or his son Elijah, just referred to, ab. 1750, and occupied by the latter till 1762, when he sold the property—lot No. 2 and buildings—to Joseph Holden, Jr. Subsequently it came into possession of his bro. Abner, who left it by will to his son Ezra. Prob. the latter lived there till he built the present Cooley house, which was subsequently his place of residence.

No. 40. In the field opp. where the road leading by the Cutler place turns from the one running to Albert Howard's, on lot No. 41, is the site of the dwelling of John Stearns, an early settler of the town. His successor was Benjamin Howard from Holden, who bought in 1775, and, after res. there nearly 30 years, sold to Joseph Howard, father of Nathan, whose widow still lives upon the estate. The old house long since disappeared.

No. 41. Directly across the stream which runs back of the residence of the late Abijah H. Raymond, once stood a house built late in the last century by Elisha Hall, and occupied by him some dozen or more years. It, with the fulling mill and other property attached, was sold in 1809 to Reuben Bond, who was succeeded in the ownership by Jesse Stone and Elias Evans, all of whom carried on business there. In 1839 the whole estate passed into the hands of Maj. Nathan Raymond, who caused the buildings to be removed.

No. 42. Half a mile N. E. of the last named site, near the foot of the hill on the road running to the Bathrick place, now owned by Albert Howard, may be seen indications of an old homestead. The buildings were erected by one John Baldwin, from Pelham, N. H., soon after the town was incorporated. He had bought the lot No. 56 of Philip Bemis, Jr., who had united it with the adjoining lot, No. 119, on which a sawmill was built ab. the same time. The entire property returned to Bemis, who sold it, consisting of two lots, house, barn, mill, etc., to Daniel Munjoy, Sept. 20, 1765. Three years later Mr. Munjoy disposed of the mill lot to Wm. Baldwin, wheelwright, and he in turn to Thos. Brigden, Esq., whose representatives, after his decease, sold to Nathan Howard. From him it passed into the possession of Nathan Raymond, as elsewhere narrated. In 1769 the lot on which the dwelling house stood, No. 36, was sold by Daniel Munjoy to Israel Moore of Lanc., who resold to Abner Holden in 1773. It was soon conveyed to Jonathan Raymond, who located upon it permanently. The original house was prob. of cheap construction, and so abandoned at an early day for a better one near the opposite end of the lot, the exact site of which can now be recognized a dozen rods E. of the dwelling recently built by Mr. Howard.

No. 43. Half a mile northward, perhaps, of the last place, and some 30 or 40 rods east of the Thomas Merriam (now M. D. Whitney) house, on 1st Div., lot No. 98, stood the house of James Taylor, built by him as early as 1751. He d. in 1792. Most of his estate had previously been disposed of to Col. Thaddeus Bond, who suffered the buildings to be removed or to run to decay.

No. 44. On the N. W. side of the road leading from the old red schoolhouse to the A. Curtis place, is a cellar, comparatively modern, in the dwelling belonging to which lived for a few years a Mr. Brosnahan. It was a temporary structure, and stood on land of Edmund Nichols.

No. 45. On the S. E. corner formed by the meeting of the highways opposite the schoolhouse just named, a still existing well indicates the site



of the former dwelling of Henry Dunster, William Lewis, Geo. W. Munjoy, and perhaps others. Nothing further found.

No. 46. A few rods east of this stood the small, temporary structure in which Thomas Conant was for some years domiciled. Prob. it had other transient occupants. Its ownership has not been learned.

No. 47. Still further east, but in the same immediate vicinity, was the residence for some years of Joseph Perry and his family. Dates and further facts unascertained.

No. 48. Nearly opposite No. 45 is the wreck of a house of fair proportions, occupied by Geo. W. Munjoy for a time, but more recently by Barney Cunningham.

No. 49. A few rods southwardly from the red schoolhouse corner, on the road leading to the Narrows, stood the dwelling in which Daniel Munjoy, sometimes known as Daniel Butterfield, spent the later years of his checkered life. He was succeeded there by Lafayette Willard, and possibly others. Ownership undetermined.

No. 50. On the rising ground 20 or 30 rods east of the birthplace of Gen. N. A. Miles, now owned by Patrick Brosnahan, lived Wm. Curtis for ab. 15 yrs. He bought the land in 1807 of John Bigelow, and prob. built upon it. In 1824 his son, Wm. Curtis, Jr., of Stoughton, sold the farm and its belongings to Daniel Miles of Petersham, who erected a new house and abandoned the old one. Some years later he put up the brick dwelling where J. Johnson now resides, and in it he subsequently had his home.

No. 51. Still farther eastward, on the north side of the turnpike, is the easily recognized site of the Miles tavern, the name of which was derived from Thomas Miles, the first landlord. The estate formerly belonged to Eg. but was annexed to W. in 1813. Mr. Miles had several successors as elsewhere mentioned. (See Chap. XVI.) The house was burned by a spark from the engine, as was supposed, soon after the railroad was opened.

No. 52. On the south side of the stream opp. the dwelling of Samuel H. Sprague in Wachusettville, once stood a house occupied for many years by Phineas Gates, who had a tannery a few rods below. Subsequent to his death his son Winslow lived there, as did also Paul Walker, Joseph Edgell, and perhaps other transient tenants.

No. 53. Some 60 or 75 rods S. E. of the residence of Benj. Wyman, on the left, is a cellar where, some 50 yrs. since, Mr. W. erected a house, which after a few years was destroyed by fire.

No. 54. Half a mile farther, in the same direction, stood formerly the so-called Bemis place where Wm. Lewis once res. Its earlier and later occupants are unknown.

No. 55. A mile southward from the last site, on Ball Hill, are there tokens of a homestead long known as the Butler place, possibly the home of James, who was taxed in W. 1770, though not then within town limits. Martin Gately was a later resident there.

No. 56. According to a deed of conveyance dated 1792, a house, at that time, formed a part of the so-called trip hammer property in Wachusettville. If so, it stood very near, if not on, some portion of the ground now covered by the upper paper mill of Mr. Wyman. John Heywood and others probably occupied it. No one living knows anything about it.

No. 57. On lot No. 106, lying S. of the lower part of the village just named, a "good house" was reported to the Gen. Ct. as standing in 1751. It was then owned by James Hay of Malden, and occupied by Benj. Gould, a resident in town for some years. The property was afterwards conveyed to Jona. Brown, grandson of Mr. Hay, who possibly lived thereon until he could build on his adjoining lot, No. 105, lately in possession of Edward R. Carter. The exact location of the structure has not been determined.

No. 58. A few rods up the hill from the trip hammer house (No. 56), between the road and the river, are there still indications of the site of the





first dwelling on lot No. 112—the first sawmill lot. It was prob. erected by Henry Stevens, and occupied by him and others until superseded by one, on the hill near the dam, which was burned a few years since. It is remembered by some of the older inhabitants.

No. 59. A small house once stood a few rods S. W. of the present res. of James Gorman in the same village. It was prob. built by David Dunster, and occupied by him and his descendants for many years. John Wood lived there for a time, and also Elmer Baker and others.

No. 60. On the N. side of the old turnpike, W. of the house of George Harris, two barns are still standing, the representatives of a large array of farm buildings formerly covering that swell of land,—most of which were burned many years since. On this lot, No. 66, Philip Bemis, the third settler in town, located. The original house was some rods easterly from the site indicated. Mr. Bemis was succeeded by his son, Capt. Edmund, who sold to Asa Farnsworth in 1801. Later owners were Asa Farnsworth, Jr., Benjamin and Henry Perkins, and Benj. F. Battles.

No. 61. In the pasture opposite, a few rods from the S. E. corner of the present cemetery, may be seen the well and other signs of the farm buildings belonging to lot No. 21. This was the homestead of David Bemis, who had a house in 1751, in which he lived till 1783, when he sold to his brother Edmund, and went to Vt. Prob. only transient tenants occupied the house afterward. It stood near the old Lunenburg and Harvard road.

No. 62. Lot No. 20, which joined the last on the N. W. and included the two additions to the original cemetery, was purchased by Samuel Gibbs in 1748. He erected a dwelling house, whose site is faintly indicated near the burial place of Geo. Smith and family. In 1772 Paul Gibbs, son of Samuel, sold the N. E. corner of the estate, with house, etc., to Nathl. Brown, who was succeeded in the ownership by Joseph Viles, Grace and Wm. Cavendar, Wm. Edgell, and Elijah Hager. The daughters of Mr. Hager sold to the town for cemetery uses in 1846; the house having been burned many years before, during the Edgell ownership.

No. 63. At the same date upon which Paul Gibbs sold the N. E. corner of lot No. 20 to Mr. Brown, he conveyed the corresponding N. W. corner to Jeremiah Gager, who built a house, etc., thereon, and no doubt resided there for a few years. Subsequent owners, in their order, were Elias Farnsworth, John Rand, Dr. Israel Green, Edmund Bemis, and Michael Gill. In 1796 the latter sold to the town for the purpose of enlarging the "burying ground." The house and barn were then standing, but were at once sold and taken down. The site can be recognized in the southerly part of the middle section of the cemetery territory, east of the Ahijah Wood burial lot.

No. 64. At the foot of the Meetinghouse Pond, opp. the barn of Hobart Raymond, is the site of the Reuben Fenno house, destroyed by fire a few years ago. It was built on the corner of the original Joseph Holden farm, lot No. 1, by Abner Holden, son of Joseph, prob. about the time of his marriage, in 1752, and was occupied by him, as is supposed, till his father's decease in 1768. It thereafter passed successively through the ownership of Wm. Bemis, Ebenezer Bemis, Dodd and Sawyer, Abel Wood, Benj. Dike, Reuben Fenno, Wm. Edgell, Jr., and Reuben Fenno again, to his son, Frank B. Fenno, in the possession and occupancy of whose widow it was when burned.

No. 65. Joseph Lynde, a temporary early settler in the township, located on lot No. 9, building a house upon it, one-third of a mile S. W. of the old common. Indications of its exact site can be seen on the N. side of the road as it descends towards the S. Westminster crossing. After Mr. Lynde left the place it was occupied by Robert Seaver, Benjamin Hosley, whose bro. Joseph owned it, and perhaps others. In 1765 it was bought by Rev. Asaph Rice, and thereafter occupied only by transient tenants, probably, till its demolition at an unknown date.



No. 66. House lot No. 14 lay directly S. E. of the well-known Damon lot, and bordered on the pond. Wm. Baldwin, who purchased it of the O. P. in 1738, built upon it some five years afterward and had his home there awhile. He conveyed it to Benj. Garfield, from whom it passed through the hands of Edmund Fuller of Stow to Reuben Miles in 1749. Mr. Miles res. there till 1776, when he sold to his son Nathan, who, 12 yrs. later, disposed of it to Stephen Hoar. Prob. Mr. Hoar lived there but a few years, if at all, and only casual tenants afterwards.

No. 67. On the easterly side of Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, partly in the road, may be seen marks of the site of a former building. It was prob. a barn belonging to the estate of Daniel Hoar, an early settler, his house having been located on the opp. side of the highway, near some clusters of lilac bushes still growing there. Mr. Hoar's son Stephen, who succeeded him, built the hotel on the same lot, about 1800, and the original dwelling was demolished.

No. 68. A still usable well some twenty rods N. W. of the last-named locality, in the old "Muster field," marks the spot on which were the farm buildings of Eliezer Bigelow, who came to the place with his aged father, Joshua, a soldier in King Phillip's War, in 1742. The house was occupied by Mr. B. and his son Joshua until abandoned for a new one directly on the road—the John Bigelow place, now owned by Frederick Nichols.

No. 69. Some 80 or 100 rods west of the well-known Benson Bigelow farmhouse (now R. J. Lavers'), near a small barn, was the home of Richard Newton, a resident of the township when incorporated. Mr. N. d. ab. 1772, and the property was bought by Daniel Hoar, and remained in possession of himself and sons for a great many years. Later owners unknown. The house was standing far down into the present century. Its last occupant, so far as informed, was Joel Flag.

No. 70. In the extreme W. part of the town, on the old Co. road leading from near P. P. Ellis' to S. Gardner, in what is known as the "Clark pasture," is a cellar and other signs of a former homestead. In 1778 the lot No. 40, 3d Div., was purchased by James Guggins from Dorchester, who built and lived there some years. From him it passed through the hands of several non-resident proprietors to Daniel Hinds from Boylston, who occupied it while in town. In 1798 Hinds sold to Josiah Flagg, Lanc., and he, in 1802, to Lemuel Johns from Pn., a colored man, who was there with his family till 1810. From Mr. Johns it passed to Moses Smith, Lanc., thence to Josiah Flagg again, and finally to Jonas Clark, Waltham, from whom the property derived its name.

No. 71. Somewhere between the last named place and the Clarendon Oxford house, on the old turnpike, lived a few years and died, Micah Graves. Whether or not others res. there is not known. The house was little more than a shanty.

No. 72. In a pasture belonging to P. P. Ellis, on the N. side of the road leading westward from his residence, is an old cellar. In the house which once covered it lived another colored family by the name of Ebbets. Prob. it had occupants whose names are unknown. By whom it was built or owned has not been learned.

No. 73. Westerly from the last named place, near the borders of the town, is a homestead site reached by a side-way from the main thoroughfare. It was owned and occupied in 1787 by John Adams, great uncle of the present Alden F. Adams, who prob. erected the buildings and became the first resident. He was succeeded by his son, Daniel, who lived there some years, selling in 1824 to his son-in-law, Joseph Metcalf of Pn., a long-time resident. He was followed by Joshua Upham, the last known occupant. The lot was No. 32, 3d Div.

No. 74. A cellar on the E. side of the road ab. one-third of the distance from the old Minott sc. house site to the Daniel Sawin, Jr., now Wid. Nor-





man Seaver, corner, marks the spot where Daniel Sawin, Sen., lived and died. Samuel Learned and others succeeded him.

No. 75. Still farther southward, on the same side of the road, was the Abner Sawin residence, in which, after his decease, his son Charles, and perhaps others of the family, lived.

No. 76. On the corner opp. where Wid. Norman Seaver now resides, a dwelling was erected and occupied for a few years by James Sawin. There was a blacksmith shop on the premises. There also lived Henry Weed, a somewhat noted iron-worker of his time, and also Wm. Bemis, a well-known blacksmith in town seventy or eighty years ago.

No. 77. Some half a mile S. W. of the former Asahel Seaver place, now in possession of W. E. Chambers on No. 13, 3d Div., once resided John Dunn, having built a house there ab. a hundred years ago. Whether or not he had successors is unknown. The property belonged to the estate of his wife's father, Josiah Puffer.

No. 78. One of the early homesteads in town was that of Benjamin Bellows, located on the central Hub. road, half a mile S. of the Knower corner, so-called. Remnants of an old orchard, seen soon after beginning to ascend the hill, mark the general location of the buildings, their exact site not being determined. At a later day the premises were owned and occupied by Ephraim Robbins, whose name the place formerly bore.

No. 79. Indications of an ancient residence are to be seen some fifty rods N. of the present Susan Derby dwelling, not far from where D. La Ferrier lives. It is thought to have been built and occupied by Joseph Sweetzer, who md. Persis, dau. of Reuben Miles. Afterwards a family by the name of Lewis lived there, and prob. others.

No. 80. The still remaining cellar and other tokens of a farmhouse, etc., ab. 40 rods S. of the residence of Mrs. Josiah Foster, near S. West., show where Benj. Garfield settled in 1742. Subsequent owners and residents were Wm. Baldwin, Lieut. John Miles, and his son Thomas, Salmon Leland, and Jotham Keyes, the last occupant of the premises.

No. 81. The well-known place so long in possession of John K. Learned, at the corner formed by the divergence of the Rutland and Worcester roads, was originally built upon by Seth Walker, the first miller of the township, ab. 1742. Following him as residents there were Andrew Darby, his son John, and gd. son, John, Jr., David Nichols, Aaron Sawin, and Mr. Learned, who located there ab. 1840. The house was burned some years since.

No. 82. In the rear of the present residence of Ephraim Lufkin, formerly Harrington place, near the line of the old proprietors' road, are there traces of the home of Susannah Child, an unmd. woman, who lived there some 50 years. She was sister of Sarah Child, the first wife of Seth Harrington, and of Joshua Child, who first settled on the lot No. 23, and, no doubt, built the house.

No. 83. On lot No. 27, lying on both sides of the stream above the George Smith sawmill, Jonathan Lawrence had a house in 1751. He sold in 1753 to Joseph Hosley, and he, in turn, the next year to Nathan Maynard from Sudbury. Mr. Maynard, in 1757, enlisted in the F. and I. War, and died in the service. The house, which stood on the W. side of the stream a few rods N. of the G. Smith dwelling, with adjoining lands, soon after passed to the possession of Nathan Wood, and only transient tenants lived there afterward.

No. 84. On a bridle way leading from near the last named site to Wachusettville, was located the house of Hubbard Dunster. After his occupancy it was owned by Joseph Rider, Ebenezer Sawin, who sold to Nathan Darby and Ezra Miller, but who the residents were has not been ascertained.

No. 85. Near by the last was the residence of Dudley Bailey, who md. Mr. Dunster's sister, Ruhamah. Both places were a part of lot No. 76, the old David Dunster farm.





No. 86. On the road to Wachusett Lake, below the Tottingham place, now owned by Mrs. Larrabee, stood the dwelling of the late Daniel Foscett, Jr. It was built by Ebenezer Conant ab. 1750, who soon sold to his bro. Thomas, a permanent resident on it. His son, Thos., Jr., owned it awhile, then sold to Cowee and Jones. When they failed, Simeon Sander-son came into possession of the property. Preston Pond bought it in 1827 and conveyed it to Mr. Foscett, the last resident owner, in 1830.

No. 87. Very early in the history of the township Joseph Gibbs was the occupant of lot No. 102, now represented by Wm. H. Benjamin. He had a house there in 1751. It was on the high land near the eastern extremity of the lot, in the neighborhood of Crow Hill, where memorials of it are still to be seen. Mr. Gibbs d. before 1758, when his bro. Clark sold the estate to Timo. Hoar of Concord, whose son, Timothy, Jr., settled permanently upon it.

No. 88. The third lot S. of Mr. Gibbs' was that of Robert Seaver, who in 1751 had "2 acres cleared and a frame of a house built." He prob. finished and occupied the house. The exact site has not been found. After his d., before 1755, the property went into the possession of John Estabrook, who, having a dwelling already on his house lot, allowed this one to go to decay.

No. 89. On the same lot (the odd No. 70), by the side of the road south of the John C. Miller (now Peeler) place, is a cellar which marks the former residence of John Hadley. It was built by him at a comparatively modern date, and was occupied by him and others.

No. 90. Opposite the present residence of W. H. Evans, near Sc. Ho. No. 7, formerly was the house of Dea. James Walker, prob. built by Moses Stearns, who sold the lot, No. 68, to Mr. W. in 1760. After the d. of Mrs. Walker, in 1826, the buildings were removed and all signs of their existence were obliterated.

No. 91. Ascending the hill westward from Wachusett Lake, on a high knoll south of the road, one may find an old cellar on which was the residence for many years of Samuel Harrington. If he had any successors, they were but temporary ones.

No. 92. In the same neighborhood, twenty rods, perhaps, south of the present Parcher place, is what remains of the cellar of a house built by John Headley (Hadley) of Lincoln, and perhaps occupied by him for a time, but sold to his son Josiah in 1769. A few years after, Mr. Hadley sold to John Mead of Ashm., and he very soon to Edward Goodnow of Pn., who lived there. In 1782 Edmund Barnard bought it and it was subsequently occupied only by transient tenants. Among these was Nathan (?) Lewis.

No. 93. On the Miller road, so-called, running along the eastern slope of Graves' Hill, some 30 rods S. of the present dwelling of James M. Childs, lived for a while John (?) Ryan, the cellar of whose house still remains. The building was a temporary one and disappeared some years ago.

No. 94. Fifty or sixty rods farther south, on the W. side of the road, is the site of the Drury farm buildings. They were erected apparently by Joseph Hosley, who sold the lot, No. 60, with improvements, to his son Wm. in 1760. After res. there 15 yrs. Wm. Hosley sold to Peter Graves, and he in turn to Paul Matthews in 1797. The next year Mr. Matthews conveyed the estate to Eleazer Drury. After Mr. D's d. in 1845, the buildings went to decay.

No. 95. Still farther south, on the same side of the highway, stood the residence of three generations bearing the same name, Samuel Merriam, in regular succession. The oldest purchased the lot, No. 61, and located upon it as the first resident in 1772; the youngest d. in 1853. Members of the family lived there a few years afterward, when the place, as a homestead, was abandoned.



No. 96. On the adjoining lot, No. 59, lying mostly over the hill, some 40 rods S. E. of the residence of James M. Davis, is a cellar-hole distinctly recognizable. On it a house was built ab. 1750 by Jacob Warren, who d. a year or two later. His wid. md. Lieut. John Miles, who thereby came into possession of the estate, afterwards owned and prob. occupied by his son Thomas. In 1805 it was sold to Levi Graves, who removed the buildings.

No. 97. About half a mile directly S. of the last site, near where the old No. 3 Sc. Ho. formerly stood, on lot 72, is there a cellar upon which a dwelling was erected in 1763 by Hananiah Rand. Twenty yrs. later he sold to James Bowers, whose name the place bore for a long time, and who was prob. the last resident proprietor. It ultimately became the property of Asa and Reed Merriam.

No. 98. The adjoining lot southeastwardly, No. 73, was purchased by Stephen Calef of Waltham in 1756. He erected farm buildings upon it and spent most of his subsequent life there. The buildings stood on the summit of the hill W. of the recent site of No. 3 Sc. Ho.

No. 99. On the E. side of the Pn. road, ab. 100 rods S. of the Reed Merriam (now J. W. Black) corner, may be seen distinctly marked among the walnuts the site of the dwelling of Wm. Stedman, erected ab. 1762. Dying unmd. soon after, his bro. James came into possession of the property. He d. bef. 1783, when his widow(?), Sarah Stedman, sold to Thomas Merriam. Nothing further known.

No. 100. Beyond the last named place, on lot 87, lived John Gill, who had "a small frame of a house" in 1751. Mr. Gill d. a few years later, and his wid. sold to Capt. John Carter of Lanc., who res. there some time and was succeeded by his son Thomas. Site of house undetermined. In 1792 the property was divided and disposed of to Saml. Brooks, Worc., Nicholas Dike, and Thos. Merriam.

No. 101. On the westerly Pn. road, there is the cellar of a house recently owned and occupied by Joshua Liverpool. The farm, consisting of 1st Div. lots Nos. 70 and 71, was first built upon by Michael Brigden before 1751. He sold to Joseph Hosley in 1771, and Hosley in turn to Timothy Heywood in 1777. The original house was abandoned, and the well-known brick one erected ab. 1800. Mr. Heywood was succeeded by his son, John, who sold to Edmund Nichols in 1855. After passing through two or three hands it came into the possession of Mr. Liverpool. The house was destroyed by fire in the fall of 1891.





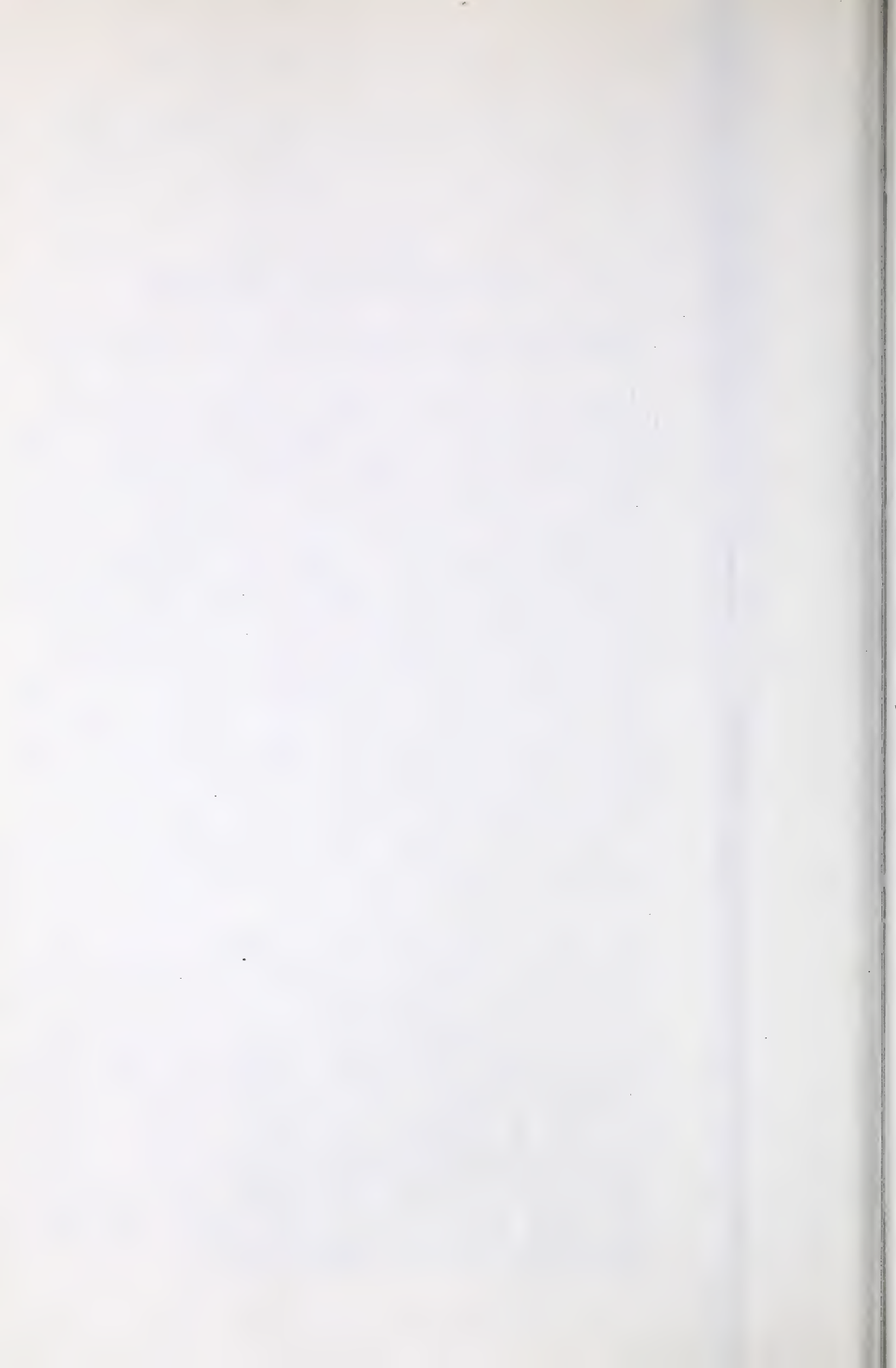
## CHAPTER XX.

### THE SLAVEHOLDERS' REBELLION.

THE NATIONAL SIN—STEPS TO TREASON—FOUR TERRIBLE YEARS—  
WESTMINSTER MEN ENGAGED—THE SOLDIERS' MONUMENT, ETC.

DURING the very year in which our Pilgrim Fathers came to the new world in order to secure to themselves and their posterity the blessings of civil and religious liberty, a Dutch shallop worked its way up the sinuous channel of the James River in Virginia to Jamestown, where a little colony of English immigrants had established itself thirteen years before. Beside the usual freightage of such craft, it had on board twenty Negroes stolen from the continent of Africa, which were sold as bond-servants for life to the unscrupulous, gold-seeking adventurers, genteel spendthrifts, and worthless profligates, of which that colony was chiefly composed,—“men,” as was said, “more inclined to obtain their daily bread and acquire a competency or fortune by the unrequited toil of other men’s hands than by their own honest industry and frugal care.” Thus was sown upon these American shores the seed-grain of a giant iniquity, the harvest whereof, in the then far away years, was cruelty, suffering, and woe unutterable,—nay, in the end, treason, rebellion, and a fearful holocaust of bloodshed and death.

This was the first act of a tragic drama whose shifting scenes, as time went on, revealed the surely accumulating mischiefs and miseries consequent upon a flagrant violation of the law of God and of the inborn rights of man. The second transpired when the founders of the Republic, on supposed grounds of public policy, consented to the incorporation of guaranties to slaveholding in the organic constitution of the nation they were instrumental in founding upon the virgin soil of the western world. The recognition and virtual sanction of the system of slavery by the fundamental law of the land, seemed to have a lamentable effect upon the people at large, degrading the public conscience in respect to the evils of that system, and palsying the efforts previously put forth by the friends of impartial liberty for its extinction. Anti-slavery societies, which had long existed, either died out or lapsed into a state of inactivity which rendered them practically useless. For a generation or more, things pertaining to the great iniquity were allowed to drift, and the designs of the slave power had an opportunity to crystalize into definite and obstinate forms.



This guilty and ominous silence was broken at length, in 1820, by the introduction into Congress of a proposition to admit Missouri into the Federal Union as a slave state. The revelations then disclosed concerning the spirit and purpose of the southern taskmasters aroused the latent hatred of tyranny among the people from its long-continued repose, and stimulated it to new efforts in behalf of the principles of liberty and the rights of the oppressed in the land. These efforts culminated in that great movement, which, ten years later, inaugurated the "thirty years' war," on the moral and religious plane, between freedom and slavery, constituting what may be appropriately called "the morally grand and heroic age of American history." Notwithstanding the advantage conceded to the enemies of liberty by the guaranties of the constitution, and the triumphs previously gained by them in the National Legislature and before the Federal Courts, the labors of its friends were unremitting, well-directed, and effective. Slowly but surely the cause for which they toiled, despite all opposition, advanced, gaining new adherents from year to year, and ever-increasing accessions of power, until it rose to ascendancy, not only in the moral sentiment of the great mass of the people of the North, but in the political counsels of the nation itself, as shown by the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency of the Republic in 1860.

This triumph, though won by legitimate methods, exasperated to insane madness the myrmidons of oppression in the country, who at once made known by word and deed the enormity and malignity of their purposes and aims. The slumbering embers of treason and rebellion, long-nourished in their breasts and made ready for any act of desperation and rage, burst forth in one of the most gigantic and appalling civil wars that ever afflicted and desolated God's fair earth. The inauguration and prosecution of that conflict constitute the history of the country virtually for four long, weary, fearful years, the details of which are written in the annals of the time and need no repeating. The result only may be mentioned—the restoration of the dis-severed union of the states, the unconditional emancipation of the slave, and the re-establishment of the Republic on a broader, surer, because a more just and righteous, basis than ever before. Dearly did the nation pay for its sin, in blood and life and treasure, fulfilling and justifying in a marked degree the teaching of history and the declaration of holy writ,—“Whatsoever a man [or nation] soweth, that shall he [or it] also reap.” To a presentation of the part Westminister took in this great struggle for union and liberty, in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, the attention of the reader is herein invited. It will be seen that as were the fathers in the struggle for independence in 1776, so were the sons in the struggle for universal freedom in 1861.



Abraham Lincoln was formally inaugurated President of the United States March 4, 1861. At that date seven slaveholding states, with South Carolina at the head, had withdrawn from the Federal Union, had organized a Southern Confederacy, and elected Jefferson Davis President, duly installing him in office on the 18th of the previous month. Moreover, several United States forts and arsenals located within the jurisdiction of the seceded states had been taken possession of by the slavocratic usurpers, with the large stores of arms and ammunition they contained, and considerable numbers of troops had been gathered at different points, notably at Charleston, S. C.,—the portents of, and preparations for, coming violence. In command of these forces and supplies were men trained, for the most part, in national military schools, for the United States army, who were fully committed to the cause of the seceders.

On the 12th of April Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor, commanded by the gallant and loyal Col. Robert Anderson, was fired upon by a detachment of Confederate artillery under Gen. G. T. Beauregard, and thirty-two hours afterward was surrendered to the rebel assailants. The war had actually begun. As the tidings of what had transpired were flashed through the North, the gravity of the situation began to be realized, and when, three days later, April 15th, the President issued his call for 75,000 troops, the hearts of the loyal people were nerved to the highest tension of patriotic indignation. Preparations were at once made for answering the call. On the 17th the heroic Massachusetts Sixth of the State militia, recruited from Lowell and vicinity, left Boston for Washington to aid in the defense of the threatened capital. As this regiment was passing through Baltimore on the 19th, the anniversary of the battles of Lexington and Concord, it was confronted and fired upon by a rebel mob, two of its members being killed, the first victims of the strife at arms. Event followed event in rapid succession, awakening throughout the loyal North a determination to maintain the government at all hazards, and to support the President in his purpose to resist this unholy attempt to overthrow and destroy it. Town seemed to vie with town in patriotic zeal and in active efforts to meet the demands of the hour. Westminster was not far behind the foremost in its endeavor to aid the imperiled Republic and rescue it from impending destruction.

At a town meeting called April 29th to see what should be done in response to the requisition for troops, it was

*"Voted* to raise a company of volunteers and pay the expense of uniforms and each man one dollar a day, in addition to government pay, while in actual service, not exceeding 3 months, and expenses of organization.

*"Voted* to furnish the officers with revolvers and to raise \$1000 for the above purposes.

*"Voted,* to choose a Committee to procure the uniforms, if a sufficient





number be enlisted, or the number enlisted be joined by others from any other town, to make up a company."

In accordance with this vote, Charles A. Forbush, Augustine Whitney, and Harrison G. Whitney were elected, to be joined by an equal number to be appointed by enlisted men, for the duty specified. Pursuant to this action it is stated that "twelve men enlisted at once," the first contribution of the town to the service of the government in the great crisis. To these, other recruits were added from time to time until, according to the report of the town officers made March 3, 1862, the number had reached 46 at the end of the year.

On the 5th of November, 1861, the town again

*"Voted* That the Selectmen be instructed to pay to all those persons from this town who went as volunteers in the 15th Regt. and all other volunteers from this town to whom the Selectmen can pay according to the advice of N. Wood, (the town's attorney), the same to be according to the vote of the town Apr. 29, 1861."

The number of men previously enlisted for the suppression of the Rebellion proving insufficient, President Lincoln, on the 2d of July, 1862, issued a proclamation for "five hundred thousand more." Under this requisition Governor Andrew called upon the several towns and cities of the Commonwealth for their respective proportionate number of the same. In response thereto the citizens held a meeting, July 19th, and

*"Voted*, That this town furnish their proportion of volunteers (twenty-two men) and pay them one hundred dollars each when they are mustered into service and accepted by the government of the United States.

*"Voted*, That the Selectmen, Assessor, Treasurer, and Clerk be authorized to procure enlistments, but without any compensation from the town for their services."

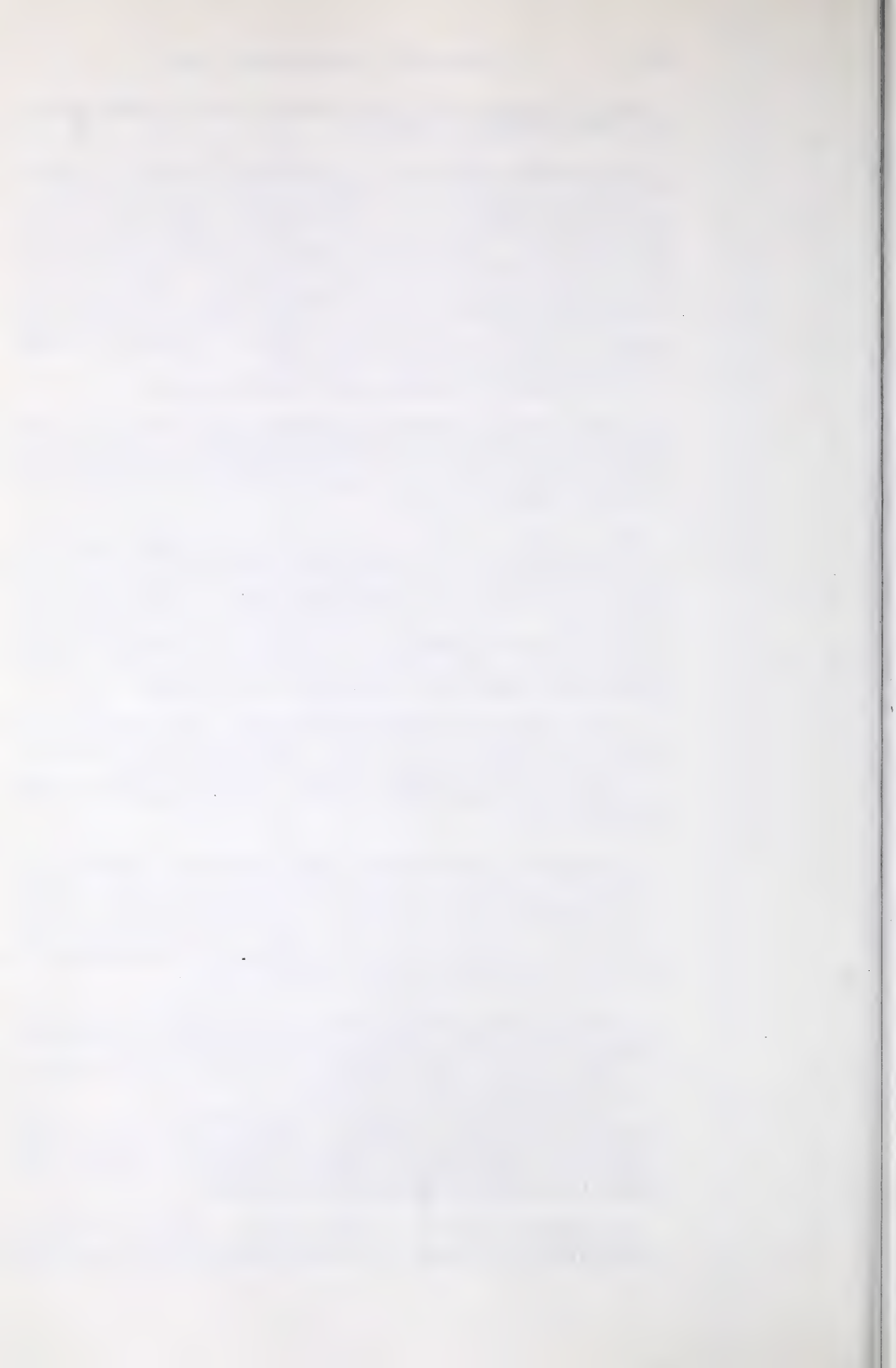
The need of troops growing more serious and imperative by reason of the obstinacy and military strength of the enemies of the Republic, an additional call for three hundred thousand nine months' men was made on the 4th of the following August. A town meeting to take action in reference thereto was held on the 25th of the same month, whereat it was

*"Voted*, That the town raise its quota of nine months' men by volunteers, and pay to each man a bounty of one hundred dollars whenever they are mustered into service and accepted by the U. S. government.

*"Voted*, That the Selectmen, Assessors, Treasurer, and Augustine Whitney be a Committee to carry out this vote.

*"Voted*, That there be a Committee of three persons . . . to act in connection with similar Committees in adjoining towns without remuneration for their services [from the town] to look after our sick and wounded soldiers in the service, and, if expedient, to bring home for interment the bodies of those who may fall in battle or by disease."

Agreeably to this vote, Joseph Hager, Augustine Whitney, and Charles A. Forbush were made members of this committee.



It does not appear from the records that any action of the town relating to the Rebellion was taken during the entire year 1863. Few recruits seem to have been demanded of Westminster that year, probably for the reason that its quota had been more than filled under previous requisitions.

March 14, 1864, a call upon the country was made for two hundred thousand three years' men, of which number Westminster was requested to furnish its share, whereupon, in order to encourage enlistments, the citizens at a meeting held April 4th

*"Voted,* That the town raise money to pay to each soldier enlisted or procured to fill the quota of Westminster under the last call of the President and any future call during the year, the sum of one hundred and twenty-five dollars."

This offer it seems was not sufficient to secure the requisite number, and a draft to supply the deficiency took place in the month following. Certain of the drafted men were excused from entering active service by paying the stipulated commutation fee of three hundred dollars, the places thus made vacant being filled by hired substitutes.

The Rebellion died hard, and between the casualties of war and the inroads of disease, the forces in the field were deemed inadequate to the exigences of the situation. Consequently, a call for five hundred thousand more men was issued on the 18th of July. In what manner, or to what extent the town responded to this call, has not been ascertained. No public action seems to have been taken till the 4th of November, when it was

*"Voted,* To authorize the Selectmen to pay recruiting expenses," "incurred or which may be incurred by them during the current year to fill the town's quota under any call which has been or may be made by the President of the U. S., to an extent not exceeding the sum of fifteen dollars each for new recruits and twenty-five dollars for veterans.

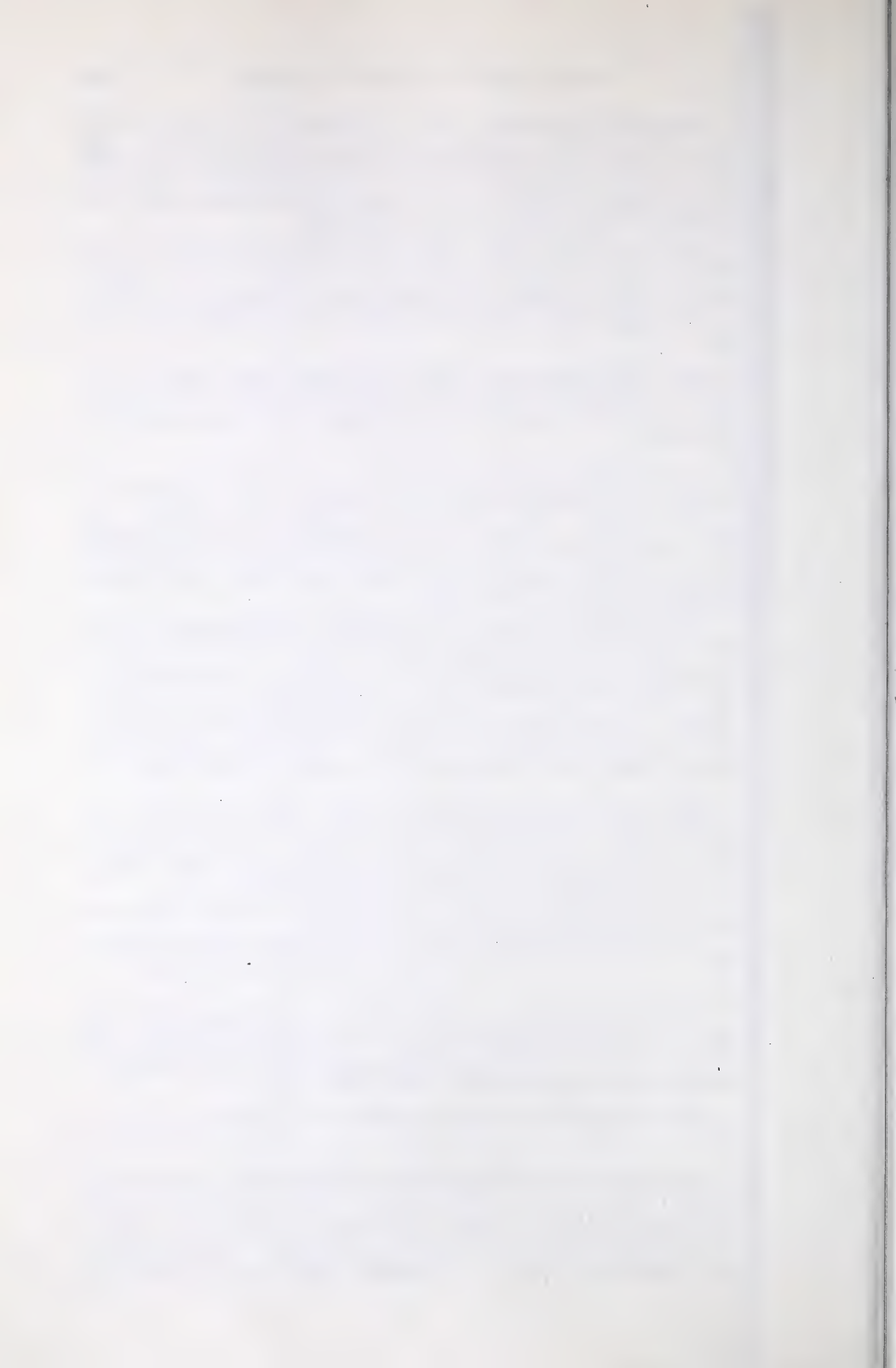
*"Voted,* To authorize the Selectmen to pay the town bounty to those who put in substitutes for the credit of the town's quota.

*"Voted,* To authorize the Selectmen to draw the town bounty for all the recruits that they have procured and had credited to the town's quota."

The only subsequent action of the town relating to the long and costly struggle between the loyal friends of the Union and Liberty and the seceding traitors, occurred at the adjourned annual meeting held April 3, 1865, when it was

*"Voted,* To pay the town bounty to soldiers who re-enlisted for the town's quota."

Six days later, April 9, 1865, the Rebellion was virtually brought to an end by the surrender of Gen. Robert E. Lee at Appomattox, Va., in a letter addressed to Lieut. Gen. U. S. Grant, then at the head of the Federal army. On the 26th of the same month Gen. J. E. Johnston entered into stipulations





for a cessation of hostilities with Gen. W. T. Sherman at Bennett's House, N. C. Other departments of the Confederate army in different localities soon afterward capitulated to Union commanders,—the last occurring on the 26th of May, when Gen. E. Kirby Smith gave up the trans-Mississippi forces to Maj. Gen. E. R. S. Canby, thereby closing the conflict and re-establishing the supremacy of the Republic throughout the entire territory of the seceded states. This final act of the tragic national drama was anticipated by the capture at Irwinsville, Ga., fourteen days before, of the arch rebel and conspirator, Jefferson Davis, with his family and attendants, by Lieut. Col. Pritchard of the 4th Michigan cavalry, and a body of his men.

Thus ended the greatest civil war of modern times,—the most unnecessary, irrational, audacious, and bitter conflict that ever convulsed a nation, deluged a land with blood, multiplied widows and orphans on every hand, and filled human hearts and homes with lamentation and woe. Yet in the midst of their desolation and grief the people rejoiced that the Republic was safe, that slavery was no more, that the stars and stripes floated over an undis severed country—now indeed “the land of the free and the home of the brave.” All were glad to return once more to the cultivation of the arts of peace, to the quietude of domestic and social life, to customary avocations and pursuits, to be no longer disturbed by the alarms of war, reports of carnage and death, or the loss of dear and beloved ones consigned, by the shock of battle or the ravages of camp-engendered disease, to premature graves.

It is at the present writing impossible to ascertain how many native-born sons of Westminster were sacrificed to the demon of American slavery during the four years' continuance of this terrible conflict, and the number will probably never be known to the registries of time. Of the thirty-four soldiers whose names are upon the monument, hereafter to be more fully noted, twenty-two were born in this town, and of the ninety-five different men serving on the town's quota, more than one-fourth were killed on the battlefield, died either in the hospital, or, at an early day, by disease engendered in the service of their country, while probably as many more have had, or will have, their mortal lives essentially shortened by causes incident to their army experience.

According to statistics collected presumably from trustworthy sources by Adj. Gen. Schouler of Massachusetts, the amount of money expended by Westminster on account of the Rebellion, exclusive of State aid, was \$10,694,—such aid, afterwards reimbursed, being in the aggregate \$7,775.68.

The women of the town were by no means indifferent to the exigencies of those fearful times, and to the obligations imposed upon them thereby. With diligent, patriotic, self-forget-



ful zeal they engaged in the work of mitigating the sufferings of their relatives, friends, and neighbors, in camp and field, not only by words of encouragement and sympathy, but by such substantial, material help as their warm hearts and ready hands could render. They organized a Ladies' Aid Society, composed of most of the matrons and maids of the community, of which Mrs. Sally M. Titus was president. This society met regularly for counsel and work in the soldiers' behalf. It contributed about \$1200 worth of clothing, hospital stores, etc., for the sick and wounded at the front, besides \$525 in money.

### ALPHABETICAL RECORD

#### *Of Westminster Men in the War of the Rebellion.*

##### TOWN QUOTA.

[The abbreviations are those commonly used and readily understood.]

AMES, JEROME S., s. of Jacob and Fannie M., b. W. Nov. 18, 1839; merchant, unm. Enl. as private for 9 mos. service at Ash. Oct. 18, 1862, in Co. I, 53d Regt., John Kimball, Col. In battles of Port Hudson and vicinity; must. out Sept. 2, 1863; time expired.

BAKER, ADIN F., s. of Joel and Maria (Smith), b. W. Feb. 4, 1839; a chairmaker, unm. Must. as private in Co. D, 1st Batt. Heavy Artillery, April 28, 1863, for 3 yrs; prom. corp. Co. D, June 6th, following. In no battles; stationed most of the time at Ft. Warren; disch. Sept. 12, 1865; war closed.

BAKER, JOEL B., s. of Alden B. and Eliza A., b. W. Dec. 30, 1841; mechanic, unm. Mustered into Co. H, 36th Regt., under Col. Henry Bowman, Aug. 27, 1862; served as corporal. Prob. at Fredericksburgh and other battles with regt.; disch. June 8, 1865.

BARNES, GEORGE W., s. of Samuel N. and Susan (Barnes), b. W. Feb. 28, 1841; farmer, unm. Enl. July 21, 1862, for 3 yrs. in Co. H, 36th Regt., Henry Bowman, Col.; a private. In 9th Army Corps under Gen. A. E. Burnside till after battle of Antietam, Sept. 17, 1862; soon taken sick with diphtheria which permanently incapacitated him for service; in dif. hospitals; disch. for disability Feb. 5, 1863.

BATES, ASA B., s. of Emory and Mary R., b. Phillipston, April 19, 1832; a farmer, m. Enl. as private for 3 yrs. Nov. 3, 1861, in Co. A, 32d Regt., Luther Stephenson, Col. In all battles of the Regt. during service, coming out "without a scratch"; disch. Nov. 24, 1864; time expd.

BENJAMIN, GEORGE F., s. of Ahijah W. and Mary F., b. W. Sept. 25, 1840; farmer, unm. Enl. private Co. B, 15th Regt., under Col. Charles Devens, July 12, 1861, for 3 yrs. In disastrous battle of Ball's Bluff, Oct. 21, 1861; never seen afterwards; killed in the conflict or drowned during retreat.

BOLTON, AARON S., s. of Hollis and Betsey (Sawin), b. W. April 3, 1828; farmer, m. Enl. (?) 1861 for 3 yrs. and must. as private in Co. D, 26th Regt., Edward F. Jones, Col., Sept. 17th. In battle at LaFourche Crossing, La., etc.; afflicted with pulmonary troubles and went to hospital in New Orleans; disch. for disability March 14, 1864; died Oct. 8, 1871.

BOLTON, ALONZO D., bro. of last, b. W. Dec. 17, 1835; painter, m. Enl. as private for 3 yrs. Nov. 6, 1861, in Co. A, 32d Regt., under Col. Luther Stephenson; disch. for disability June 6, 1862. Re-enl. in Co. H, 4th Mass. Heavy Artillery, under Capt. E. F. Hayward; disch. June 17, 1865; war closed.



BROOKS, ALBERT E., s. of Stillman and Eunice, b. W. July 18, 1836; a chairmaker, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. as private and must. into Co. D, 2d Regt., under Col. George H. Gordon, May 25, 1861. Drowned in Charles River, at Camp Andrew, while attempting to rescue a comrade with whom he was bathing, June 2, 1861; no service at the front.

BROOKS, ALFRED L., twin bro. of the last; R. R. station agent, unm. Enl. for 9 mos. as private and must. into Co. B, 53d Regt., Col. J. W. Kimball commanding, Oct. 17, 1862. At siege of Port Hudson; sick there and in hosp. a week; disch. Sept. 2, 1863; time expd.

BROWN, ALONZO F., s. of Philander C. and Louisa, b. W. July 11, 1833; chairmaker, unm. Enl. for three yrs. Sept. 19, 1861, and served as private in Co. F, 25th Regt., under Col. Edwin Upton. In battles of Roanoke Island and Newbern, N. C.; sick of chronic diarrhœa and in hosp. at Beaufort; disch. for disability March 27, 1863; died of typhoid fever at Fitchburg, Sept. 9, 1871.

BROWN, JOHN L., bro. of last, b. Jan. 19, 1841; chairmaker, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. Sept. 27, 1861, and served as private in Co. F, 25th Regt., under Col. Edwin Upton. In battles at Roanoke Island, Newbern, Goldsboro', N. C., Drury's Bluff, and Cold Harbor, Va., where he was wounded in the hand; must. out Oct. 20, 1864, having served his full term of enlistment.

BUTTERFIELD, WALLACE W., s. of Warren S. and Lucie, b. Temp. Feb. 17, 1843; student, unm. Enl. July 7, 1862, as private in Co. F, Chas. H. Foss, Capt., 25th Regt., Col. Upton commanding. Engaged in all the battles where his regt. took part until the first week in June, 1864, when he was wounded in the knee at Cold Harbor, Va., in consequence of which he d. in Campbell Hosp., Washington, D. C., June 17, 1864. "A brave soldier and a fine young man."

COLEMAN, LUCIUS, s. of Joel P. and Abigail K., b. W. Nov. 16, 1839; farmer, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. as private Oct. 31, 1861, in Co. A, 32d Regt., Luther Stephenson, Col., serving mostly as ord. sergt.; disch. at exp. of time, Nov. 24, 1864.

COOLIDGE, CHARLES M., s. of Charles and Nancy, b. W. May 10, 1835; attorney, unm. Enl. at Worc. July 12, 1861, for 3 yrs. in the quota for W. joining Co. A, George Rockwood, Capt., in 15th Regt., under Col. Charles Devens. In battle of Ball's Bluff, but escaped without injury; his health failing, he was disch. in consequence Dec. 15, 1861.

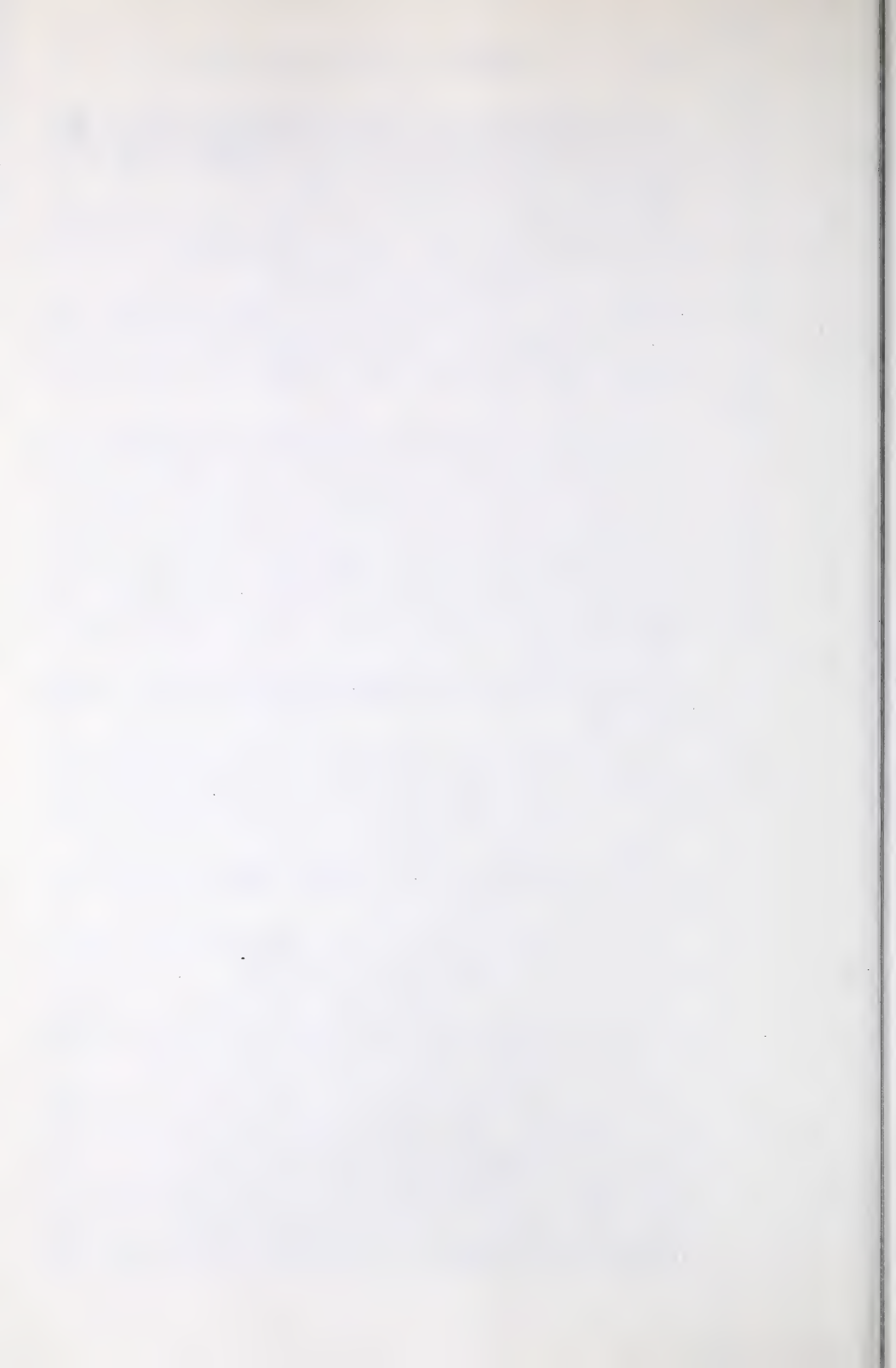
CRONAN, LAWRENCE, s. of Cornelius and Mary, b. Ireland; laborer, m. Enl. for 9 mos. as private Nov. 4, 1862, and served in Co. I, 48th Regt., under Col. Eben F. Stone. On W. records, but cred. to Gr. in Schouler's Mass. Vols.; must. out at exp. of time.

CRUSE, ROBINSON, s. of John T. G. and Jane, b. W. 1844; mechanic, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. as private and must. into the 21st Regt., Augustus Morse, Col., Aug. 12, 1862; rendered no service.

CRUSE, WILLIAM H., bro. of the last, b. W. March 3, 1842; chairmaker, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. as private Aug. 7, 1862, belonging to Co. H, 36th Regt., under Col. Henry Bowman. In battles of Antietam, Frederickshburgh, etc.; disch. for disability by order of War Dept. May 13, 1865.

DRURY, A. EVANDER, s. of Abner M. and Maria, b. W. Oct. 25, 1832; mechanic, m. Enl. Oct. 28, 1861, for 3 yrs. and joined Co. A, First Mass. Batt., afterward 32d Regt., under Col. Luther Stephenson, serving as 2d sergt. until his disch. Jan. 4, 1864. He immediately re-enl. in the same capacity, was com. 2d lieut. July 20th, and prom. to the rank of 1st lieut. April 1, 1865. In all the battles of the Army of the Potomac from July 2, 1862, to the close of the war, receiving no injury great enough to disqualify him for duty; belonged to the brigade of the 5th Corps, to which the surrender of the Rebel army of No. Virginia under General Lee was made at Appomattox, April 9, 1865; disch. June 29, 1865, at close of conflict.







MARCUS J. HAGER.



DRURY, LYMAN M., s. of Thomas and Ann, b. W. Feb. 16, 1843; mechanic, unnm. Enl. Aug. 11, 1862, for 3 yrs. as private in Co. H, 36th Regt., H. Bowman, Col. In battles of Fredericksburgh, Va., and Jackson, Miss.; disch. at exp. war, June 8, 1865.

EAGER, WILLIAM O., s. of Uriah and Mary, b. Barre, May 25, 1834; farmer, m. Must. in Co. D, 2d Regt., Gordon, Col., May 25, 1861; disch. to re-enl. Dec. 30, 1863, and served till close of war; prom. to corp.; must. out July 14, 1865, 4 yrs. 1 mo. 20 ds. in all; lost at sea Aug. 29, 1869.

ESTABROOK, JOHN W., s. of John and Selecta, b. W. April 20, 1843; farmer, unnm. Enl. for 3 yrs. March 17, 1864, in Co. F, 25th Regt., under Col. Picket. At Petersburg and other battles where the Regt. was engaged after June 11, 1864; not wd. but sick and in hosp. at Baltimore before ent. service; disch. July 13, 1865, exp. service.

ESTEY, FRANCIS, s. of Oliver and Lucy, b. W. Jan. 31, 1835; mechanic, unnm. Enl. for 3 yrs. in Co. F, 25th Regt., acting as waiter to Col. Upton. In all the battles of his Regt. till his disch. at exp. of time, Oct. 20, 1864; died June 19, 1865, of disease contracted in the service.

FENNO, FRANK B., s. of Reuben and Betsey, b. W. June 27, 1833; farmer, m. Must. in Co. F, 25th Regt., Oct. 10, 1861, for 3 yrs. service; disch. for disab. June 19, 1862; died Aug., 1862.

FINDALL, GEORGE, s. of Benj. and Mary, b. Whitehall, Vt., March 15, 1831; farmer, m. Enl. for 3 yrs. Feb. 16, 1862, as private in Co. F, 32d Regt.; disch. Jan. 4, 1864, and re-enl. the next day; mortally wd. in assault at Laurel Hill, Va., and d. on the 12th of May.

FISHER, GEORGE B., age 22, ptge. unknown. Must. in Co. C, 25th Regt., to the credit of Killingworth, Ct., Oct. 27, 1861; disch. Jan. 19, 1864, and enl. as sergt. on the quota of W.; finally disch. July 26, 1865.

FOSTER, JOSIAH, s. of Josiah and Lucinda, b. Ashby, May 2, 1823; farmer, m. Must. in Co. H, 36th Regt., as priv. Aug. 9, 1862. Wd. right arm at battle of the Wilderness, and killed by shell at Petersburg, Oct. 2, 1864.

GATES, EUGENE, s. of Leonard M. and Martha J., b. W. Jan. 2, 1839; farmer, m. Enl. for 9 mos. Sept. 6, 1862; served as private in Co. A, 53d Regt. At Port Hudson, etc., in campaign of the S. W.; in hosp., N. O., for a time; disch. Sept. 2, 1863, exp. of time.

GIBBS, BENJ. F. D., s. of George W. and Catharine, b. Upton, June 5, 1835; mechanic, m. Enl. for 3 yrs. Nov. 2, 1861, and served in Co. A, 32d Regt., as private till exp. of time. Presumably at Fredericksburgh, Gettysburgh, and other battles of the Regt.; killed by R. R. accident June 6, 1865.

GUENELL, WILLIAM, ptge., etc., unknown. Must. in Aug. 13, 1862, for 3 yrs.; served as private in Co. H, 36th Regt.; must. out at close of war, June 8, 1865.

HAGER, MARCUS J., s. of Geo. W. and Abigail P., b. W. Oct. 30, 1840; painter and teacher, unnm. Enl. Oct. 18, 1862, Co. I, 53d Regt., serving as sergt. and prom. to orderly Nov. 19th. During the passage to New Orleans on steamer *Continental*, when off Key West, he was stricken with heart disease, Jan. 22, 1863, of which he d., being buried at sea. An unusually bright and promising young man.

HARRIS, CHARLES T., ptge., etc., unknown, aged 28. Enl. for 9 mos. in Co. A, 52d Regt., John W. Kimball, Col., Oct. 17, 1862. In the La. campaign, at Pt. Hudson, etc.; disch. Sept. 2, 1863, exp. of time.

HARTWELL, CHARLES W., s. of Leander and Persis, b. W. Nov. 19, 1844; baker, unnm. Enl. at Worc. on W. quota Sept. 25, 1861, for 3 yrs. and joined Co. F, 25th Regt., as private. While in camp at Annapolis, Md., he was attacked with measles; before entirely recovering he went with the Burnside expedition to Newbern, N. C., where he had a relapse and was sent to the hosp. at Fortress Monroe; pulmonary troubles ensued and he d. Feb. 10, 1862.





HAVEY, MARTIN, ptge., etc., unknown. Must. in for 3 yrs. Oct. 5, 1861, as private of Co. E, 25th Regt.; disch. Dec. 1, 1863, and re-enl. in quota of Grafton, continuing in service till war closed; must. out July 13, 1865.

HOLDEN, AMOS B., s. of Justus and Betsey, b. Barre, July 11, 1823; painter, m. Enl. Oct. 28th, 1861, Co. A, 1st Batt., afterwards 32d Regt., F. J. Parker, Col.; com. 2d lieutenant. March 26, 1862; health failing, resigned Nov. 28th. Recovering, he re-entered the service June 5, 1863, joining 1st Batt., H. A. in the same capacity; Aug. 16, 1865, prom. to 1st lieutenant; detailed as instructor of H. A., and for a time was acting asst. Q. M. and commissary; disch. after war closed, Oct. 20, 1865. Mr. Holden was stationed at Boston during the "Draft riots" of July, 1863, assisted in guarding drafted men at Concord, N. H., from Sept. to Dec. the same year, and while in garrison at Ft. Warren, rendered the same service to Mason and Slidell, Gens. Buckner and Tileman, and other noted representatives of the Rebel Confederacy.

HOLDEN, ETHAN W., s. of Leander and Persis, b. Barre, March 7, 1831; bread-cart driver, m. Enl. for 3 yrs. as private, and joined Co. F, 25th Regt., Oct. 1, 1861; disch. for disab. July 24, 1862. Subsequently enl. in M. V. M. and rose to the rank of Capt.

HOUGHTON, JOSEPH R., s. of Elbridge and Emily, b. Stowe, Aug. 6, 1844; farmer, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. July 12, 1861, in Co. B, 15th Regt. Captured at Ball's Bluff and held prisoner 4 mos. Nov. 12, 1862, he was transferred to Co. I, 1st Art. and Nov. 13th was disch. to join the regular army. Serving his full time, he was must. out July 28, 1864.

HOWARD, N. PORTER, s. of Nathan and Betsey, b. W. Oct. 17, 1832; farmer, unm. Enl. June, 1861, and must. in July 12th. Joined Co. B, 15th Regt. and was in the disastrous battle at Ball's Bluff Oct. 21st, where he was taken prisoner and held at Richmond 4 mos. Must. out at exp. of time, July 28, 1864.

HOWE, FRANKLIN, s. of Charles and Mary, b. W. May 4, 1840; farmer, unm. Enl. at Fg. for 3 yrs. July 22, 1862, on W.'s quota, and joined Co. A, 36th Regt. as corp. under J. W. Kimball, Col. Shared the fortunes of the Regt. till the fall of 1863, when he was taken sick and sent to the hosp. at Crab Orchard, Ky. Recovering somewhat, he was able to reach home in March, 1864, but sunk into a decline and d. May 4th of the same year.

HOWE, RUFUS, s. of Reuben and Hannah, b. Hub. Sept. 27, 1824; farmer, unm. Enl. for 9 mos. Oct. 17, 1862, and joined Co. G, 53d Regt. Prob. at siege of Port Hudson. Must. out Sept. 2, 1863, having served his full time.

KELLEY, PATRICK, s. of Luke H. and Catharine, b. Ireland, Dec. 25, 1843; laborer. Enl. for 3 yrs. and must. in Dec. 13, 1861.; a private in Co. H, 28th Regt., under Col. Wm. Monteith; in battle of Antietam, Sept. 17, 1862, where he was wd. and sent to the hosp. Convalescing, he came home on a furlough, but returned, ere long, to his Regt.; killed at Gettysburgh, July 2, 1863; prom. from a priv. to a corp. "A brave, true soldier."

KENDALL, EDWARD S., s. of Sylvanus and Emily, b. Royalston, July 27, 1842; painter, unm. Enl. at Fg. on quota of W. May 21, 1861; July 12th, must. into Co. B, 15th Regt.; in battles of Yorktown, Fair Oaks, Malvern Hill, 2d Bull Run, and Antietam, escaping unhurt. His health becoming impaired, he was disch. Nov. 12, 1862.

MANSUR, LORENZO, ptge. unknown, b. Rumford, Me., Feb. 22, 1819; farmer, m. Enl. for 3 yrs. Nov. 1, 1861, and joined Co. A, 32d Regt. He shared the fortunes of the Peninsular campaign under Gen. McClellan and was in the battles of Antietam, Fredericksburgh, Chancellorsville, etc. On the march to Gettysburgh early in July, 1863, he became exhausted and was sent to the Baltimore hosp. for a month; having received his disch. he re-enl. April 8, 1864, and was transferred to the 22d Vt. Regt., where he was prom. from priv. to corp.; was finally disch. Aug. 29, 1866, having served 4 yrs., 9 mos., 28 days; was once slightly wd. in the leg; returned home with shattered health from which he never fully recovered. He d. Oct. 21, 1887.



MILLER, CHARLES A., s. of Jonas and Susan, b. W. March 18, 1841; painter, unm. Enl. Sept. 24, 1861, and served in Co. F, 25th Regt. as priv. and corp; in engagements at Roanoke Island, Newbern, Kinston, White Hall, Goldsborough, N. C., Bermuda Hundred, Arrowfield Church, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg, Va. Must. out Jan. 2, 1864, but re-enl. the next day and prom. to corp.; wd. at Petersburg, June 15th, in left arm, necessitating amputation and resulting in death at Hampton hosp. July 9, 1864.

MILLER, GEORGE W., s. of Amos and Martha S., b. Gr. May 23, 1835; farmer, m. Entered service for 3 yrs. Aug. 11, 1862, in Co. H, 36th Regt.; d. of lung disease at Balt. hosp. April 7, 1863. Battles unreported.

MILLER, J. HERVEY, s. of Jonas and Susan, b. W. Feb. 11, 1832; mechanic and farmer, m. Enl. as sergt. for 3 yrs. Aug. 9, 1862, in Co. H, 36th Regt.; in battles at Fredericksburgh, Va., Vicksburg and Jackson, Miss., Blue Springs, siege of Knoxville, Tenn., Wilderness, Spottsylvania, No. Anna River, and Cold Harbor, Va.; wd. at Cold Harbor June 3, 1864, in left arm, requiring the removal of 8 inches of bone between elbow and shoulder; in hosp. at Alex.; disch. Nov. 7, 1864, on account of wd. which did not heal for a year.

MILLER, MARCUS M., s. of Amos and Martha S., b. April 8, 1840; chair-maker, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. Sept. 19, 1861, and joined Co. D, 26th Regt., under Col. E. F. Jones; at Gettysburgh and other places where his Regt. was engaged; disch. Jan. 1, 1865, and re-enl. at once in same Co. as corp; in hosp. sev. times with fever and ague; must. out at close of war, Aug. 26, 1865. D. of Bright's disease June 4, 1887.

MINOTT, EDWARD M., s. of Amos B. and Maria, b. Gr. Aug. 19, 1843; farmer, unm. Must. in Sept. 20, 1861, as priv. in Co. F, 25th Regt; in the battles of the Regt. before named; disch. Jan. 2, 1864, and re-enl.; finally must. out at close of war, July 25, 1865.

MOORE, RUFUS D., untraced, a. 30. Must. into Co. G, 42d Regt., Isaac S. Burrill, Col., July 21, 1864, for 100 days' service. No engagements reported; disch. Nov. 11, 1864, time expd.

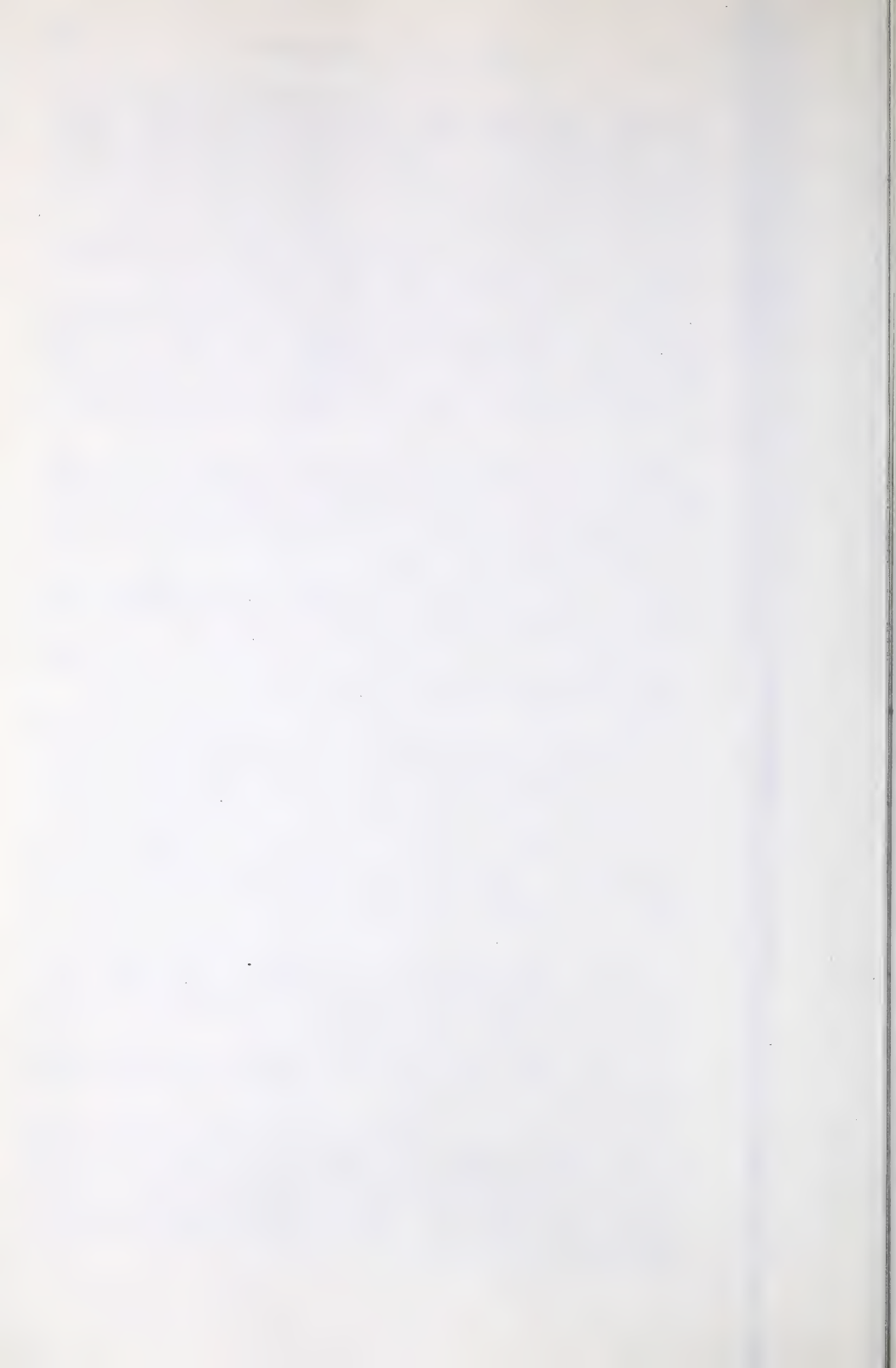
MOSMAN, AUSTIN, s. of John and Susan, b. W. Aug. 26, 1836; farmer, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. Aug. 18, 1862, in Co. H, 36th Regt. and participated in most of the battles in which it was engaged. While in service suffered from fever and ague, rheumatism, chronic diarrhœa, etc., and was in hosp. at Portsmouth Grove, R. I., Fort Schuyler, N. Y., Camp Denison, O., etc. Trans. Nov., 1864, to V. R.-C. and must. out at end of war, July 14, 1865.

NEWELL, HENRY E., s. of Aaron and Angeline, b. Boylston, Sept. 25, 1832; farmer, m. Entd. service as priv. Oct. 12, 1861, for 3 yrs., in Co. D, 15th Regt. and was prob. in most of the battles where his Regt. was engaged; disch. Jan. 18, 1864, and re-enl.; finally disch. after the war closed, July 13, 1865.

NICHOLS, FRANCIS, s. of Edmund and Mary, b. W. Sept. 12, 1829; farmer. Enl. at Fg. and must. in as one of W.'s quota for 3 yrs. July 12, 1861; belonged to Co. B, 15th Regt.; in 17 battles, including Ball's Bluff, Fredericksburgh, Antietam, and the seven days' fight in the Wilderness; wd. in the hip and disch. for disab. April 10, 1863.

NICHOLS, FREDERICK, bro. of last, b. W. Oct. 30, 1825; farmer, unm. Entd. service July 12, 1861, in Co. B, 15th Regt. and shared with his bro. the fortunes of war as just indicated. Must. out at exp. of time, July 28, 1864.

NICHOLS, GEORGE C., another bro. b. W. Aug. 10, 1841; mechanic, unm. Enl. at Fg. Sept. 27, 1861, for 3 yrs. as priv. in Co. F, 25th Regt.; engaged at Roanoke Island, Newbern, N. C., and elsewhere. Captured by the enemy at the siege of Petersburg and suffered 7 mos. the horrors of Libby, Andersonville, and Charleston prisons, where he contracted diseases of which he d. May 15, 1867. Disch. Jan. 18, 1864, but re-enl. and served till war closed; finally must. out June 17, 1865.





NICHOLS, LYMAN, a 4th s. of Edmund and Mary who went to the war, b. W. 1839; farmer, unm. Entd. service July 12, 1861, for 3 yrs. in Co. B, 15th Regt., sharing the fortunes of that body of men until trans. to Co. I, 1st Mass. Art. Nov. 13, 1862; must. out at end of enl. July 12, 1864.

OLIVER, LA FOREST, s. of Marshall and Rosanna, b. E. Berkshire, Vt., Feb. 19, 1843; mechanic, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. in 1861 and served in Co. E, 21st Regt., under Col. Augustus Morse; on W. books, but cred. Athol by Schouler; trans. to U. S. Cav. Oct. 23, 1862.

OLIVER, MARSHALL P., s. of Stephen and Mary, b. Westboro', June 16, 1812; shoemaker, m. Entd. 3 yrs. service Aug. 21, 1862, in Co. E, 21st Regt.; no report of battles engaged in; became utterly disab. and went to hosp.; disch. for incapacity to serve longer March 30, 1863; d. by his own hand, Aug. 8, 1879.

OSBORNE, PRESCOTT E., ptge. unknown; a. 21. Enl. Aug. 23, 1861, in Co. D, 21st Regt; time of service less than a year, being disch. for disab. Sept. 14, 1862.

PAGE, GEORGE H., s. of Major and Dorinda, b. W. Nov. 29, 1840; painter, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. Oct. 3, 1861, in Co. F, 25th Regt.; entd. service as priv.; prom. to corp. March 13, 1863, and to sergt. Jan. 3, 1864; must. out Jan. 2, 1864, and immediately re-enl.; in all the battles of his Regt. till June, 1864, when he received at Cold Harbor a wd. in the arm which caused his death in the hosp. at Balt. on the 28th of the same month.

PARTRIDGE, AMOS H., s. of Amos and Melita, b. Nov. 30, 1843; farmer, unm. Enl. at Worc. on quota of W. Aug. 23, 1861, and joined Co. D, 20th Regt. in command of Col. Henry Lee. Went directly to the front and was in battle of Ball's Bluff Oct. 21st, where he was captured and sent to Richmond; being attacked with the measles there, he d. for want of care, Jan. 10, 1862.

PARTRIDGE, HENRY J., bro. of the last, b. Nov. 7, 1840; farmer, unm. Enl. May 11, 1861, and was must. into Co. D, 2d Regt., Geo. H. Gordon, Col., May 25th; in battles of Winchester, Cedar Mountain, Antietam, Chancellorsville, Gettysburgh, etc.: captured at latter place by the Rebels July 2, 1863, he was taken to Stanton, Va., thence to Richmond, and confined in Castle Lightning; transferred to Belle Island, he was stricken with disease and put in a hosp.; at the end of 4 mos. March 21, 1864, he was liberated on his parole, going to City Point, Annapolis, and Chattanooga, where he was disch. May 28, 1864, his time of service having exp. He returned home in poor health by imprisonment, etc.

PECKHAM, S. HENRY, s. of Dea. Robert and Ruth, b. W. June 2, 1833; painter, unm. Enl. at Fg. on quota of W. Oct. 12, 1861, and served as drummer in Co. F, 25th Regt.; disch. May 31, 1862, for disab.; recovering his health he enl. for 9 mos. in the spring of 1863, in Co. B, 42d Regt. and went to the Department of the S. W., serving out his time; was prob. at the siege of Port Hudson, La. Having been disch. he enl. a third time, in Co. E, 59th Regt., J. P. Gould, Col., and was raised in rank from priv. to corp.; at the battle of the Wilderness, May 5-13, 1864, he fell into the hands of the Rebels and was sent to Andersonville, where he d. of disease contracted by exposure, lack of food, etc., Sept. 29, 1864.

PETTS, T. AUGUSTUS, s. of Jonathan and Elizabeth, b. Stoddard, N. H., Sept. 23, 1843; mechanic, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. July 29, 1862, and joined Co. A, 36th Regt.; in 2d battle Fredericksburgh, siege of Vicksburg, Jackson, Blue Springs, and Campbell's Station, where he was taken prisoner and sent to the just named den of horrors, dying there of typhoid fever induced by insufficient food and want of care, Aug. 12, 1864.

PHILLIPS, GEORGE W., s. of Ivory and —, b. Malden, Nov. 2, 1841; teamster, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. Sept. 19, 1861, and joined Co. F, 25th Regt.; disch. Dec. 17, 1863, and re-enl. next day on Malden's quota. Disch. June 19, 1865, the war having closed.





PIERCE, NATHAN S., ptge. etc., untraced. Enl. as priv. in Co. G, 18th Regt., James Barnes, Col., July 24, 1861; was prob. in battles of Yorktown, 2d Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburgh, Gettysburgh, etc., where his Regt. was engaged; disch. Sept. 2, 1864, his time of service having expd.

PIERCE, NELSON J., s. of Elisha and Thuseba, b. W. March 3, 1839; mechanic, unnm. Enl. for 3 yrs. Aug. 11, 1862, and served in Co. H, 36th Regt., at Fredericksburgh, Va., Jackson, Miss., and Blue Hills, Tenn. Being debilitated by sunstroke, he acted as Co. cook to excellent purpose; disch. at close of war, June 8, 1865.

PRATT, JOHN W., s. of Russell and Ann, b. W. Aug. 18, 1842; farmer, unnm. Must. into Co. H, 36th Regt., Aug. 11, 1862, for 3 yrs.; in siege of Vicksburg and at battles of Jackson, Blue Springs, Campbell's Station, Knoxville, Wilderness, and Spottsylvania; had measles and was in hosp. at Frederick, Md.; subsequently rejoined his Regt.; was wd. in right hip at Spottsylvania May 12, 1864, and disch. on account thereof, Oct. 18th; d. Sept. 16, 1881.

PUFFER, JAMES E., s. of James and Lucy, b. W. March 20, 1841; farmer, unnm. Must. into Co. A, 32d Regt., Oct. 30, 1861, for 3 yrs.; was in the Army of the Potomac and at most of its battles, including Fredericksburgh, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburgh, where he was shot in the breast and instantly expd. July 2, 1863.

RAND, EPHRAIM H., s. of Asa W. and Mehitabel, b. W. May 5, 1812; chairmaker, unnm. Enl. for 3 yrs. in Co. A, 32d Regt., May 27, 1862, under Col. Stephenson, but afterwards assigned to Co. G, same Regt., under Col. Francis J. Parker; disch. for disab. Nov. 5, 1862; not in battle; d. Vt.

RAY, JASON A., s. of Ivers and Clarissa, b. May 27, 1840; farmer, unnm. Enrolled for 9 mos. service on quota of Sterling, Nov. 17, 1862, in Co. K, 53d Regt., sharing its fortunes till must. out Sept. 2, 1863, at exp. of time: re-enl. for 1 yr. Aug. 10, 1864, on W.'s quota, in Co. H, 4th Regt., Heavy Art.; disch. at close of war, June 17, 1865.

RAYMOND, HOBART, s. of Solon and Roxa, b. W. Sept. 25, 1846; farmer, unnm. Enrolled at Readville July 26, 1864, for 100 days' service in 15th unattached Co. of Infantry; disch. at exp. of time, Nov. 15th.

RICE, ASAPH W., s. of Jonah and Nancy, b. Fg. Aug. 7, 1817; farmer, unnm. Enl. for 3 yrs. April —, 1861; must. into Co. A, 15th Regt., July 12th; at Ball's Bluff, Manassas, Antietam, and many other battles; wd. in leg at Fair Oaks and sent to hosp. at Washington, D. C.; tranferred to V. R. C. in April, 1863; must. out July 12, 1864, at exp. of time. First soldier enrolled in W.

RICE, GEORGE E., s. of Nathan and Cynthia, b. Pn. June 1, 1835; painter, unnm. Enl. for 3 yrs. Nov. 1, 1861, and joined Co. A, 32d Regt.; no battles reported. Disch. for disab. Nov. 1, 1862.

RICE, WILLIAM E., s. of Jonah and Nancy, b. Fg. March 17, 1819; chairmaker, m. Enl. Sept., 1862, and must. in Nov. 16th, serving as 9 mos. man in Co. C, 53d Regt.; in hosp. at Baton Rouge, La.; disch. at exp. of time, Sept. 2, 1863.

ROLPH, EDWARD M., s. of Nathan and Julia Ann, b. W. Nov. 19, 1844; painter, unnm. Enl. at Amherst on quota of W. Aug. 14, 1862, for 9 mos.; must. in as musician Oct. 11th, Co. G, 52d Regt., H. S. Greenleaf, Col.; at battle of Port Hudson, La., May 27, 1863; disch. Aug. 14, 1863, time of service having expd.

SAWIN, FARWELL, s. of James and Eunice, b. W. Nov. 28, 1841; baker, unnm. Entd. service as corp. Aug. 11, 1862, in Co. H, 36th Regt.; in battles of Fredericksburgh, Va., Vicksburg and Jackson, Miss.; contracted varioloid by caring for his Capt. who was sick with it, and d. in hosp. near Vicksburg, Aug. 9, 1863. "Loved and respected by all."



SAWIN, HARRISON P., s. of John and Mary, b. Jan. 19, 1841, at W.; farmer, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. in Co. H, 36th Regt., Aug. 11, 1862; battles unreported; d. of diphtheria at Weaverton, Md., Nov. 4, 1863.

SAWIN, LINCOLN L., s. of J. Dexter and Marcia, b. Gr. June 18, 1838; mechanic, unm. A 9 mos. man, joining Co. I, 53d Regt., Oct. 18, 1862; in the La. campaign with his comrades; disch. at exp. of time, Sept. 2, 1863.

SAWIN, OTIS W., s. of Luke and Clarissa, b. W. Oct. 22, 1839; painter, m. Enl. as priv. Oct. 10, 1861, for 3 yrs. in Co. F, 1st Regt. Cav., under Col. Robert Williams. No engagements reported; disch. for disab. Aug. 9, 1862.

SAWTELLE, WALTER H., s. of Moses and Clarissa, b. W. Feb. 22, 1829; mechanic, m. Must. as corp. into Co. F, 25th Regt., Sept. 19, 1861; in battle at Roanoke Island, Newbern, Kinston, etc. Disch. Jan. 2, 1864, and re-enl. next day; wd. near Petersburg May 16th, in the arm, necessitating amputation; in Hampton hosp. 2 mos.; then rem. to Portsmouth Grove, R. I., where he d. on the 26th of July.

SCOLLAY, JOHN, s. of Thomas and Mary, b. Ireland, June 17, 1845; farmer, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. in Co. F, 25th Regt., Oct. 1, 1861. Presumably in the earlier battles where his Regt. was involved; disch. for disab. March 19, 1863.

SCOLLAY, THOMAS, bro. of last, b. Ireland, April 20, 1847; farmer, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. in Co. B, 15th Regt.; his health failing, was trans. to V. R. C. Nov. 10, 1863; came home on a furlough and d. of consumption March 19, 1864.

SEAVER, EDWARD A., s. of Isaac and Betsey, b. W. Nov. 28, 1841; farmer, unm. Must. into Co. H, 36th Regt., for 3 yrs. service Aug. 14, 1862; in battles of Fredericksburgh, etc.; health failing, he was in hosp. at Camp Denison, O., and Portsmouth Grove, R. I., for some months, and disch. for disab. Dec. 24, 1863.

SEAVER, ISAAC, s. of Isaac and Abigail, b. W. Oct. 16, 1823; blacksmith, m. Enl. for 1 yr. and must. into Co. H, 4th Regt. Heavy Art. under Col. Wm. S. King, Aug. 20, 1864; engd. in defense of Washington; no battles reported; disch. at close of war, June 17, 1865.

SHARON, EDWARD, s. of James and Mary, b. Boston, Dec. 25, 1843; farmer, unm. Enl. for 9 mos. Nov. 6, 1862, and must. into Co. C, 53d Regt.; in Banks' expedition, La.; at battles of Port Hudson, etc.; disch. at exp. of time, Sept. 2, 1863.

TUCKER, FRANK E., ptge. etc., unknown. Enl. Aug. 12, 1862, and served in Co. K, 21st Regt., Wm. S. Clark, Col.; prob. in battles of Antietam, Fredericksburgh, etc.; disch. at exp. of time, Aug. 30, 1864.

WETHERBEE, HENRY M., s. of Caleb and Mary, b. W. Aug. 19, 1839; farmer, unm. Entd. 3 yrs. service Aug. 11, 1862, in Co. H, 36th Regt.; wd. in right arm at the battle of the Wilderness, May, 1864, and was in hosp. 4 mos.; disch. for disab. on account of wd. Sept. 18, 1864.

WETHERBEE, JOSEPH A., bro. of the last, b. Nov. 11, 1836; farmer, unm. May 25, 1861, must. into Co. D, 2d Regt. for 3 yrs.; followed the fortunes of his Regt. till health failed, for which reason he was disch. Dec. 18, 1863.

WHITE, LOWELL C., s. of Marshall and Marsylvia, b. W. March 1, 1843. Enl. at Fg. for 3 yrs. and joined Co. B, 15th Regt., July 12, 1861; at Ball's Bluff, Winchester, etc., to Petersburg, some 22 battles in all; disch. July 28, 1864, at exp. of time.

WHITMAN, EDWARD, s. of Jonathan and Sally, b. W. Feb. 26, 1824. Enl. in Co. F, 25th Regt., Oct. 7, 1861; battles unreported. Jan. 18, 1864, was disch. and re-enl. at once on quota of Gr.; finally must. out at close of war, July 13, 1865.

WILCOX, FRANKLIN B., ptge., b., etc., unknown. Enl. May 25, 1861, for 3 yrs. and joined Co. D, 2d Regt. Killed at battle of Cedar Mountain, Va., Aug. 9, 1862.





WOOD, AARON W., s. of Allen B., b. W. Enl. in Co. A, 36th Regt., July 24, 1862, for 3 yrs. service; was presumably at Fredericksburgh, etc., with Regt.; disch. March 25, 1863; cause unascertained.

WOOD, FRANCIS A., bro. of the last, b. W. Entd. service in same Co. July 28, 1862, and must. out May 12, 1864. Nothing further.

WOODWARD, HORACE S., s. of John and Nellie, b. March 30, 1820; farmer, m. Enl. in Co. H, 36th Regt., Aug. 13, 1862; d. of wds. received in battle at Knoxville, Tenn., Oct. 19, 1863; no details obtained.

YOUNG, EDWARD C., s. of Orange and ———, b. W. June 1, 1844; farmer, unm. Enl. Aug. 11, 1862, in Co. H, 36th Regt.; in all the engagements of his Regt. to the battle of the Wilderness, May 5-7, 1864, where he was either killed or taken prisoner; nothing heard of him afterwards.

Besides the above-named 95 men, who, it is believed, were true and faithful soldiers, and who by re-enlistment increased the number to 111, there were 25 others enrolled and credited to the town, either as substitutes for private individuals, or as mercenaries hired to fill up a required quota when other means of raising recruits proved ineffective. The character of these persons and their value in the crisis, when estimated by a military standard, are sufficiently indicated by the fact that the great majority of them, if not the entire number, deserted before coming into action. Their names were:

John Sykes.  
Louis Chantry.  
Edward Beal.  
Chas. Thompson.  
Henry A. Wilkins.  
Chas. Anderson.  
John Hennessey.  
Chas. F. Harris.  
John McCauley.

Bernard Johnson.  
John Ragle.  
Alex. Thurston.  
Wm. Harmon.  
Joseph Baxter.  
John McToney.  
Richard Conaver.  
Michael Quinn.

Robert Bartlett.  
M. M. Bridge.  
Chas. Sinclair.  
John McCarty.  
Peter Manx.  
Theodore Hall.  
Patrick Murphy.  
Peter May.

#### ALPHABETICAL RECORD

*Of Soldiers, native born or long resident in Westminster, who served on other quotas.*

BAKER, HENRY, b. W. Oct. 22, 1835; m. Enl. in Co. H, 4th Regt., H. A., under Wm. S. King, Col., Aug. 20, 1864, at Fg. on whose quota he served 10 mos.; remained through the war and disch. June 17, 1865; sick and in Dangerfield Hosp. awhile.

BATHRICK, NELSON Z., birth, etc., unknown. Enl. Co. A, 15th Regt., on Ashby quota, March 18, 1862, and is supposed to have served at Yorktown, Fair Oaks, Malvern Hill, Antietam, and other places where his Regt. was on the field; March 16, 1864, he was disch. to re-enl. as corp. in same Co. on quota of Leom.; died at Auburn Hosp., D. C., June 30th, of wounds received at Petersburg.

BENTON, HENRY S., s. of Joel W. and Lucy, b. Stonington, Ct., June 3, 1843; farmer and mechanic, unm. Enl. on quota of Taunton, where he was living, June 15, 1861, in Co. C, 7th Regt., under Col. D. N. Couch; served as 1st sergt. In battles prob. of Fair Oaks, Oak Grove, Fredericks-



burgh, Chancellorsville, etc.; disch. Dec. 26, 1863, and re-enl. in same company and capacity; wd. in some of the battles in Virginia during the early summer of 1864, in consequence of which he d. at Alexandria, July 10th, the same year.

BLAKE, FRANCIS, s. of Benjamin and Dolly, b. W. Nov. 13, 1832. Enl. in the regular U. S. army at Nashua, N. H. Killed at the battle of North Anna River May 17, 1864; no details.

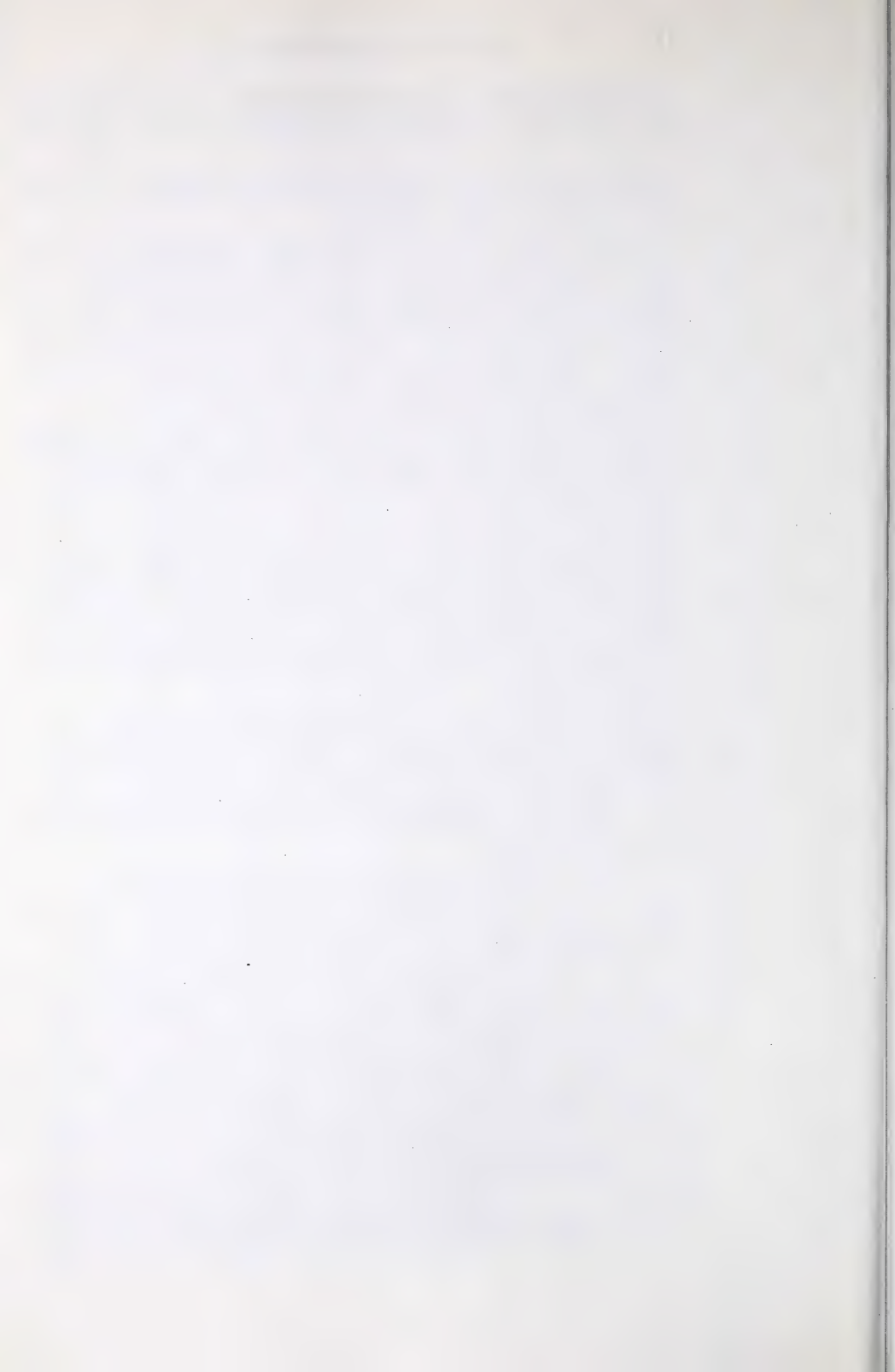
BOLTON, HENRY C., s. of Hollis and Betsey, b. W. May 20, 1834; policeman, unm. Enl. at Jamestown, N. Y., where he was residing, Nov. 17, 1861, in Co. B, 100th Regt., N. Y. S. V.; served as private and corp. In battles of Williamsburgh, Seven Pines, Oak Grove, Malvern Hill, Fort Wagner, and Drury's Bluff; taken prisoner at last place May 15, 1864, and sent to Andersonville; under the barbaric regime of that institution he shrunk in a few months from 185 lbs. weight to less than 100, but, more fortunate than many, he came out alive, being paroled Nov. 17, 1864, and must. out of service Jan. 31, 1865; is now living at Jamestown.

BOLTON, S. NELSON, bro. of the last, b. Aug. 20, 1829. Enl. for 30 days June 25, 1863, and served as sergt. in Co. B, 68th Regt., N. Y. National Guards, in response to Governor Seymour's call for recruits to repel the threatened rebel invasion of Penn., etc. As Gettysburgh defeated the plans of the enemy the service of this contingent was not required, and the men were disch. July 29th.

CHESMORE, ALFRED M., s. of Reuben G. and Elizabeth, b. W. July 3, 1838, a resident of Albany, N. Y., at the opening of the war. Enl. for 2 yrs. July, 1861, in the 18th Regt., N. Y. Infantry; rose from private to corp., sergt., and 1st lieut. in 1862, and had command of his Co. In battles of Bull Run, Fredericksburgh, Chantilly, So. Mountain, and Antietam. At exp. of service in July, 1863, he re-enl. in 43d Regt., Mo. Inf., and under a lieut.'s commission acted as asst. adjt. and asst. prov. marshal in S. E. Mo. till the close of the war; slightly wd. in elbow, but never off duty. He now res. at St. Louis, Mo.

COOLIDGE, MARCUS M., s. of Charles and Nancy, b. W. Aug. 27, 1839; mechanic. Residing at St. Louis, he enl. April. 29, 1861, in Co. H, 1st Regt. Am. Vol., under Col. Frank P. Blair. Was at the battle of Booneville, the first of the war in Mo., June 17, 1861, and was one of the two fatally wounded there, by a shot in the left breast; he fell exclaiming "I am shot"; trying to raise himself he sunk back exhausted and soon breathed his last. Prob. the first son that W. gave to the country in the terrible conflict with treason and slavery.

CUMMINGS, CHARLES, s. of Joshua and Hepzibah, b. Royalston, Feb. 26, 1821. Came to W. with his parents when a lad, receiving his education in Dist. No. 3, and in the Academy, where he fitted for Amherst Coll.; well known in town; editor of *Phoenix*, Brattleboro', Vt., for some years before the Rebellion broke out. Enl. Aug. 14, 1862, in Co. E, 11th Regt., Vt. Vols., of which he was at once made 1st lieut. Before leaving for the seat of war he was com. Lieut. Col. of the Vt. 16th, already stationed near Fairfax, Va., where for a while he served as prov. marshal under Gen. Heintzelman. While there he came near being captured in a bold raid of the enemy, barely escaping by having left his post a short time before the attack. When the Confederate Commander Lee entered Penn. with his forces in June, 1863, the 16th Vt. received orders to join the army of the Potomac hastening northward to repel the invader. It arrived at Gettysburgh by a severe march in season to participate in the 2d day's fighting, and to aid in gaining the memorable victory of that crowning battle of the war. Joining in the pursuit of the enemy the Regt. reached Virginia about the time when its enlistment expired and it was consequently discharged. Lieut. Col. Cummings spent the following autumn and winter in conducting his paper, though watchful of the fortunes of the loyal forces and desirous of an opportunity of rendering the country further service at the front.







LIEUT. COL. CHARLES CUMMINGS.

W. P. ALLEN, GARDNER, MASS.





Early in Feb., 1864, he was called upon to assist in recruiting a new Regt. — the 17th Vt., of which he was assigned the command. Before its ranks were filled he was ordered to report with his men to Gen. Burnside, then in charge of the 9th Corps at Alexandria, who was awaiting orders to join in the general movement about to be made on the Confederate army of Northern Va. He arrived in season to take part in the battle of the Wilderness, May 5-7, in one of the engagements of which he received a slight wound in the head. Urged to go to the hospital, he refused, preferring to remain where, if opportunity offered, he could be of service to those under him. In a few days he had so far recovered as to return to his command, and follow Grant in his triumphant advances towards the Rebel capital. Arriving at Petersburg, where active operations were going on, he received orders to take a certain battery which was doing much injury to the Federal troops. With numbers pitilessly inadequate he led the charge, "never expecting," as he said, "to come out again." The attempt was, however, successful, "the colors of the 17th Tennessee, 2 cannon, 1 caisson, 6 horses, 70 prisoners, being captured in 15 minutes" with only 135 men.

The exhausting excitement of this assault, with attendant hardship and the weakness caused by his recent wound, so prostrated Col. Cummings that he was obliged to return home for rest and recuperation. But he was ill at ease away from his command, and as soon as he was able, much too soon his friends believed, he went back to his Regt. still confronting the enemy at Petersburg, alternately resting and fighting as the fortunes of the campaign allowed and required, and entered at once upon active duty. On the morning of Sept. 30th he led an attack upon a Rebel stronghold, captured it and put men in possession of it. It was afterward named Fort Cummings in honor of him. Later in the day while rallying his troops to renewed efforts, he received a shot in the left thigh, which severed the femoral artery, and proved almost instantly fatal. As he fell he uttered his last words, "Save the colors, boys," and immediately expired. His body was returned to Brattleboro', where impressive funeral services were held, the interment taking place at Mt. Auburn.

CUMMINGS, ISRAEL, bro. of the last, b. R. Aug. 2, 1832. Enl. in Co. C, 21st Regt., Augustus Morse, Col., July 19, 1861, on the quota of Fg., and was chosen sergt. In the several battles of his regt. until May, 1863, when he was taken prisoner at Chancellorsville, but soon after paroled. His parole being cancelled he entered the service again, taking part in the siege of Knoxville, where he received a wound in the thigh of which he d. Dec. 4, 1863.

CUTTING, CHARLES H., s. of N. Howard and Mary R., b. W. Enl. in Co. F, 51st Regt., at Worcester, where he resided, Oct. 14, 1862, and served as corp. during his brief military career. Was in the battles of Kinston, White Hall, and Goldsborough, N. C. Many privations and weary marches soon told upon his sensitive constitution and he fell a victim to diseases incident to army life. He was sent to the hosp. at Newbern, where he d. Jan. 24, 1863. Of him his Capt., John S. Baldwin, said in *Worc. Spy*, "He will be greatly missed in Co. F, and in the Regt. where he was very popular"; and his Col., A. B. R. Sprague, spoke of him as follows: "Prompt and faithful in the performance of his duty, soldierly in his bearing, he won the affection of his comrades of whatever rank. He gave his life for his country in the hour of its greatest peril. Who hath done more?"

CUTTING, HENRY J., s. of Jonas and Elvira, b. W. Enl. at Fg. for 3 yrs. in Co. H, 36th Regt., Aug. 12, 1862. Prob. in battles at Fredericksburgh, Va., Jackson, Miss., and Blue Springs, Tenn. He d. at Knoxville, Tenn., Dec. 9, 1863; credited to Fg.

DRURY, LEVI A., s. of Joseph B. and Anna C., b. W. Aug. 9, 1847. Entered service as private in 4th Regt., H. A., Wm. S. King, Col., Aug. 22, 1864, on the quota of W. Boylston. Wd. in the right hand at Fort Ward, Va., one of the last encounters of the war; disch. July 15, 1865, hostilities having ceased; now lives at Lawrence, Mass.



EATON, FRANCIS, s. of John and Emma, b. W. Jan. 27, 1841. Enl. in 5th Regt., R. I. Vols., Aug. 6, 1862, and served in battles at Kinston, White Hall, and Goldsborough. The Regt. was changed to H. A. and stationed in forts about Newbern, N. C., where he was detailed as postmaster and prom. from private to orderly sergt. His health giving way, he was in hosp. at Newbern and Portsmouth Island in 1862 and 1863, but recovered and continued in active service till the war closed, arriving home July 4, 1865.

EATON, JAMES M., bro. of the last, b. W. Oct. 31, 1832; chairmaker. Enl. in Co. A, 32d Regt., Oct. 31, 1861, as private in the quota of Gr., his place of residence. Entering the service, he soon fell sick with chronic pleurisy and was disch. therefor April 7, 1862.

EATON, WENDELL, another bro., b. W. Sept. 5, 1834; mechanic. Enl. in quota of Temp., Co. A, 32d Regt., Nov. 3, 1861. Engaged at Gettysburgh, Brandy Station, Wilderness, Laurel Hill, Spottsylvania, 2d Bull Run, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg, where he was wd. June 19, 1864, by a ball striking him in the chin and passing to the shoulder, whence it was extracted; was sick and in hosp. for some time; disch. Nov. 24, 1864, having served his time.

EDGEHILL, STILLMAN W., s. of Wm. and Lorina, b. W. August 27, 1829; chairmaker, unm. Enl. at Fg. and joined Co. B, 15th Regt., Nov. 26, 1861, as corp., going directly to the front to fill up the ranks depleted by the fearful slaughter at Ball's Bluff, Oct. 21st; was presumably present at the many battles in which the 15th was engaged, until so severely wounded in the right arm at Cold Harbor, Va., early in June, 1864, that amputation was deemed necessary. He was not disch. from the service, however, till Jan. 11, 1865. He subsequently was employed for many years at the State House as page, doorkeeper, etc., until he mysteriously disappeared Jan. 24, 1892. Three months later, April 24th, his body was found floating in Charles river, Cambridge, into which he is supposed to have plunged from Harvard bridge, when in a state of temporary mental aberration.

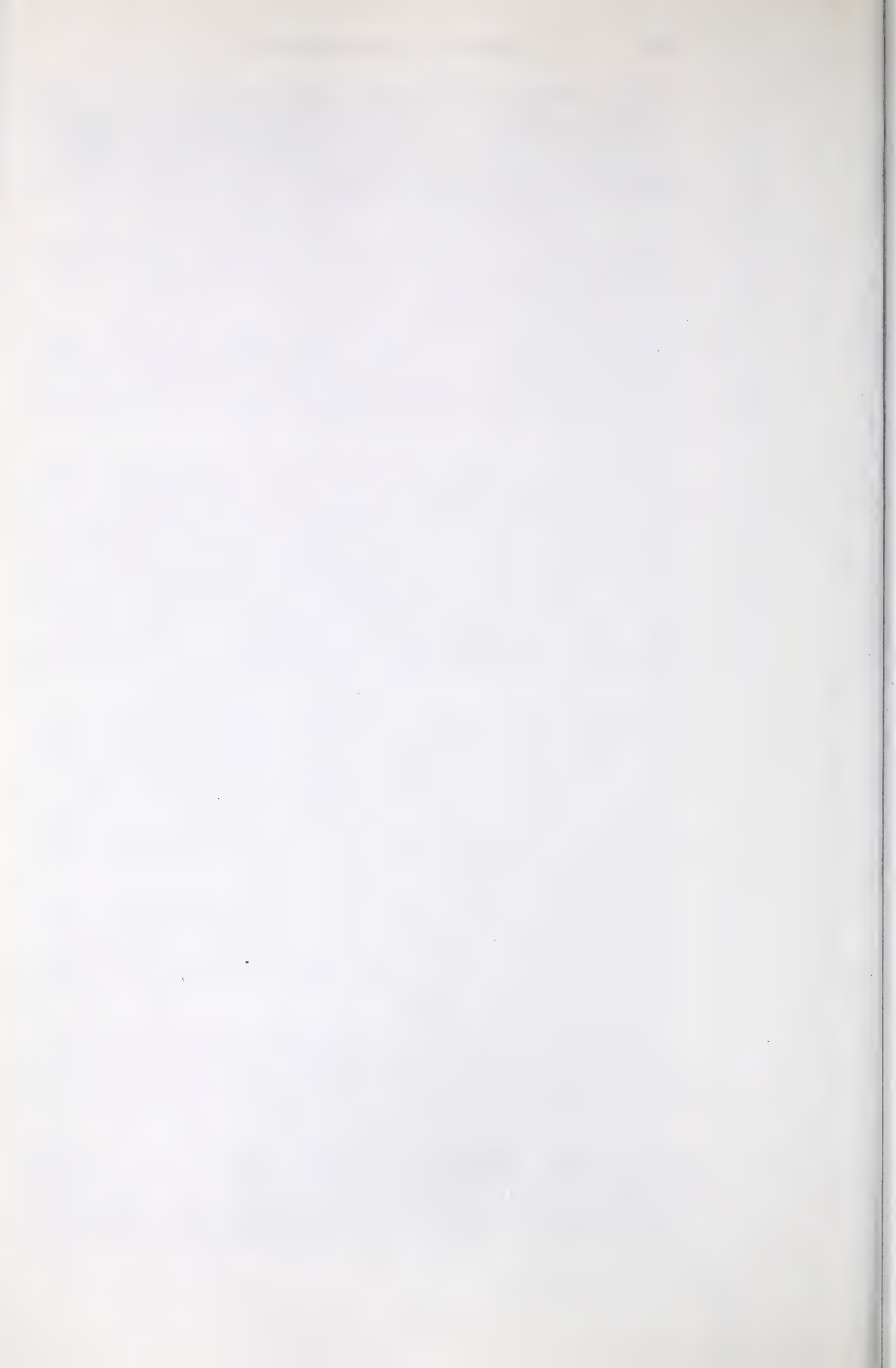
HARRINGTON, JAMES S., s. of Daniel and Nancy, b. W. July 20, 1845; farmer, unm. Enl. in 2d Bat., L. A. Vt. Vols., at Cavendish, Aug. 4, 1864; served mostly in Dept. of S. W.; in numerous engagements with the enemy on the banks while patrolling the Miss. river; also with the Rebel gunboat Webb. Disch. July 31, 1865, the war having terminated; living at W.

HARRINGTON, LANSFORD, s. of John and Abigail, b. W. Oct. 6, 1830; farmer. Enl. in Co. G, 53d Regt., on the quota of Gr., Oct. 17, 1862, for 9 mos.' service; is supposed to have been at the siege of Port Hudson in the summer of 1863. Disch. Sept. 2d, at exp. of service.

HEYWOOD, CHARLES H., s. of John and Betsey, b. W. March 16, 1839; clerk, unm. Enl. at Worc., where he res., on quota of that city, as corp. in Co. C, 51st Regt., A. B. R. Sprague, Col., Sept. 25, 1862, for 9 mos.' service; in battles at Kinston and Goldsborough, N. C. Disch. at exp. of time, July 27, 1863; re-enl. for 1 yr. Aug. 17, 1864, and served as 2d lieut. in 4th Regt., H. A., under Col. Wm. S. King; not in action, the war being near its close. Disch. June 17, 1865; res. Worc.

HOWE, JOHN W., s. of Benjamin and Sally B., b. W. July 2, 1839. Enl. on the quota of Athol, Nov. 8, 1863, in Co. B, 27th Regt., under Col. Horace C. Lee; was in the Va. campaign during the summer of 1864, at one of the battles of which he was taken prisoner; being sent to Andersonville, he d. there of starvation on the 22d of July the same year.

HUDSON, JOHN W., s. of Rev. Charles and Martha, b. W. July 10, 1836; attended common school and Academy here; grad. Harv. Col., 1856; read law and practiced in Boston. Enl. for 3 yrs. in 35th Regt., M. V., Edward A. Wilde, Col., Co. D, of which he was com. 2d lieut. Aug. 2, 1862; prom. to 1st lieut. Sept. 18th, and to Capt. Apr. 30, 1862; Aug. 16, 1864, was advanced to Maj., and to Lieut. Col. Feb. 2, 1865, which position he held when





must. out at exp. of service, June 9, 1865. His Regt. was in some of the most important battles of the war,—at So. Mountain, Antietam, Fredericksburgh, the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, No. Anna, Cold Harbor, Welden R. R., Petersburg, in Va., Jackson, Miss., Campbell's Station, Knoxville, Tenn., etc. After the war, Lieut. Col. Hudson was app. judge advocate on the staff of Gen. Pierson, 2d Brig., M. V. M., a position held by him at the time of his death at Lexington June 1, 1872.

KENDALL, CHARLES B., s. of Edward and Pamela B., b. W. Dec. 30, 1840; fancy painter, unm. Enl. as priv. for 3 yrs. May 7, 1862, in Co. A, 25th Regt.; Oct. 29th he was prom. to sergt. maj.; disch. Jan. 18, 1864, to re-enl. in the same capacity; prom. to 1st lieut. June 13, 1864, and to Capt., May 17, 1865; was with his Regt. in battles at Cold Harbor, Petersburg, etc.; finally disch. July 13, 1865. Living and in business in Boston.

KENDALL, GEORGE M., s. of George and Sarah E., b. W. Dec. 13, 1840; clerk, unm. Enl. at Worc. Aug. 20, 1862, and joined Co. C, 51st Regt., Sept. 25th. Served as private and acting com. sergt. at Kinston, White Hall, and Goldsborough; disch. July 27, 1863, time having expd.

KENDALL, HENRY J., bro. of Chas. B., b. W. Dec. 18, 1842; clerk, unm. Must. into Co. C, 51st Regt., Sept. 25, 1862, on quota of Worc. Soon attacked with malarial fever which so preyed upon him that he d. at Newbern, N. C., Apr. 19, 1863.

LAMB, JOHN G., s. of Greenleaf and Hannah, b. W. May 30, 1828. Enl. in Co. F, 32d Regt., Feb. 27, 1862, on the quota of Worc., where he res.; disch. for disab. Oct. 18, 1862; d. Sept. 9, 1872.

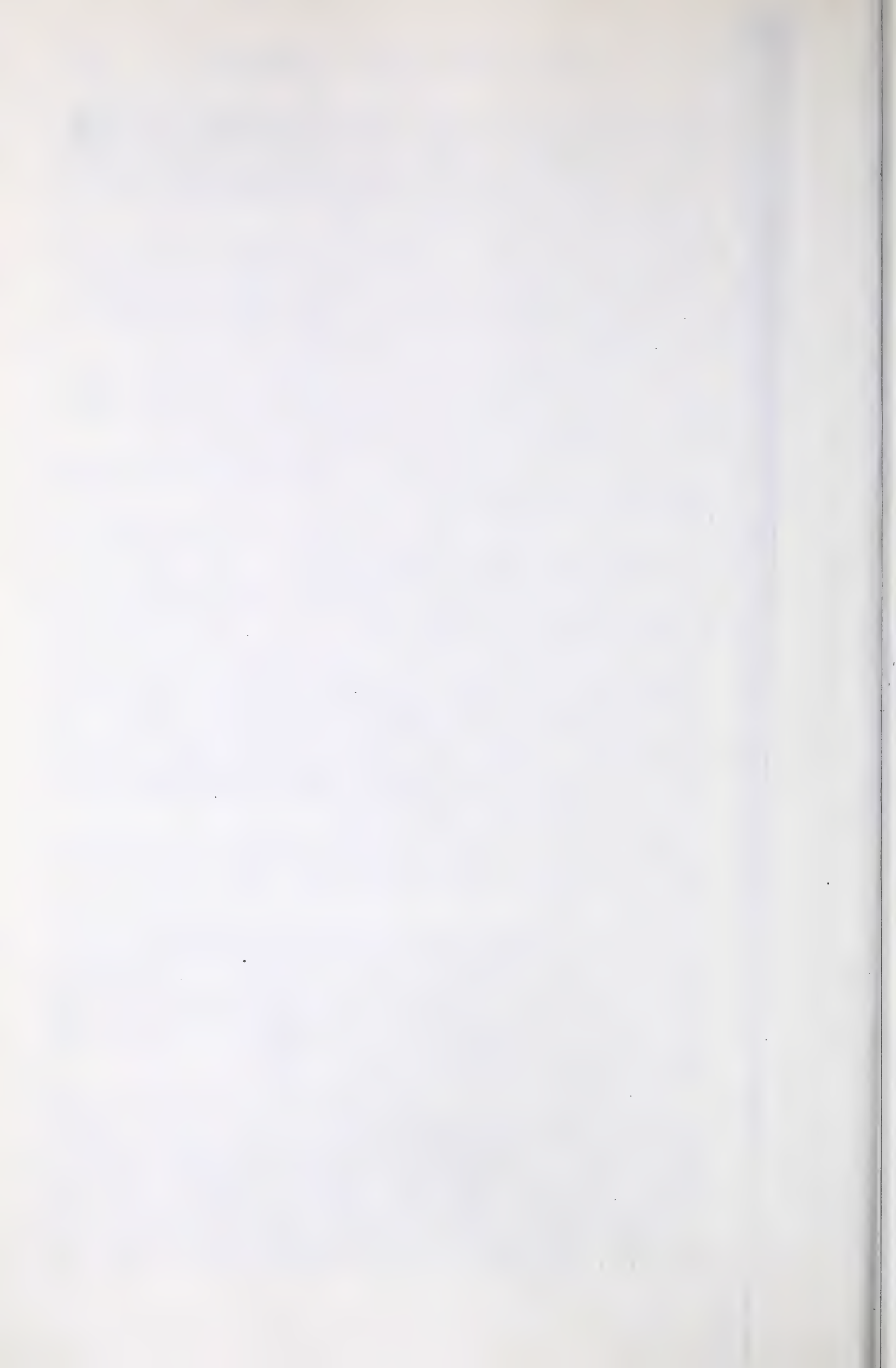
LAWS, S. NELSON, s. of James and Thankful, b. W. July 23, 1817. Enl. as principal musician in 21st Regt. July 19, 1861, and disch. for disab. July 27, 1862; served on quota of Gr.

MERRIAM, AARON W., s. of Jonas and Prudence, b. W. Aug. 11, 1834; mechanic, unm. Enl. for 3 yrs. at Boston on quota of Gr. Oct. 8, 1861, and served as musician in the 28th Regt. under Col. G. W. Cartwright. Disch. by act of Congress reducing the number of regl. bands Aug. 17, 1862. Was at reduction of Ft. Pulaski, Ga., Apr., 1862. Re-enl. in Feb., 1864, and joined the band of 2d Brig., 1st Div., 20th Army Corps, under command of Gen. W. T. Sherman. In the Atlanta campaign and memorable "March to the Sea," and afterward through the Carolinas to Richmond; disch. June 13, 1865, the Confederacy having "collapsed."

MERRIAM, NEWELL A., bro. of the last, b. W. Oct. 31, 1826; mechanic. Enl. Oct. 8, 1861, for 3 yrs. as musician in 28th Regt., M. V. Prob. at Ft. Pulaski with his bro.; disch. by order of War Dept. pursuant to act of Cong., Apr. 17, 1862.

MERRIAM, WILDER, bro. of last two, b. W. May 23, 1840; mechanic, unm. Enl. at Keene, and served as musician in band of 2d Regt., N. H. V., under Col. Gilman Marston. He also was disch. by order of Sec. of War Aug. 8, 1862. Re-enl. on quota of Gr. Feb. 20, 1864, for the same service in Co. C, 2d Regt. M. V., whence he was transferred to band of 2d Brig., 7th Div., 20th Army Corps, under Gen. Hooker, one of Gen. Sherman's gallant commanders in the celebrated marches named above. Was prob. present at the surrender of Johnston to Sherman, Apr. 26, 1865, when the Confederacy "gave up the ghost"; disch. July 17, 1865.

MILES, NELSON A., the most distinguished and widely known of all the native sons of Westminster, was the youngest child of Daniel and Mary, b. Aug. 8, 1839. He was educated in the schools of the town, but left the place in his opening manhood to engage in mercantile pursuits in the city of Boston. At the breaking out of the Rebellion his youthful patriotism was aroused and, ere many months had passed, he responded to the call for men to aid in its suppression. Sept. 9, 1861, he enl. in 22d Regt. under Col. Henry Wilson, then U. S. Senator from Mass., and was com. 1st lieut. Oct. 1st. Leaving Boston at once the command joined the Army of the



Potomac near Washington. Lieut. Miles was soon detailed to the staff of Gen. Silas Casey, whence he was transferred to that of Brig. Gen. O. O. Howard, where he remained till active operations began in the spring of 1862. He was present with the advance on Manassas in March, and at the siege of Yorktown early in May. At the battle of Fair Oaks he was complimented by the commanding officer for meritorious service. His bravery and superior skill were illustrated in the fact that when the 81st Penn. Regt. lost its Col. and was falling back from its position, he appeared at its head, rallied the men under a heavy fire, regained the ground that had been lost, and forced the enemy to retreat, leaving their dead and wounded lying on the field. His horse was shot under him and he was seriously wounded in the foot. But he would not retire from the conflict. Mounting another horse he remained on duty till the Rebels were put to rout and the victory was complete.

For the gallantry displayed at this time he was raised to the rank of Lieut. Col. by Gov. Morgan of N. Y., and assigned to the 61st N. Y. Regt., his com. being dated on the day of the Fair Oaks engagement. He rose from rank to rank with surprising rapidity. On the 30th of Sept., for heroic service at Antietam, he was made Col. of the same Regt., and after the long and fearful struggle of the Wilderness, May 12, 1864, was raised to the position of Brig. Gen. At the close of the battle of Reims Station, Aug. 23, 1864, when his consummate judgment and masterly activity as commander of one of the divisions of the 9th Corps are said to have driven back the enemy who had carried the Federal intrenchments and gained temporary possession of the field, thus wresting victory from the very jaws of defeat, he was recommended by Gens. Grant, Mead, and Hancock for the highly honorable position of brevet Maj. Gen. He was made Maj. Gen. of Vols. Oct. 1, 1865, the youngest officer connected with the army who had attained so exalted a rank.

After hostilities had ceased and peace once more prevailed, Gen. Miles was put in charge of the military district in which was located Fortress Monroe, the largest fortification in the country, where at the time the chief conspirator and President of the Southern Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, was confined. It has been said with probable truth that "in the history of the War of the Rebellion, Massachusetts will not have a man whose record is more brilliant than his." So far as gallantry, patriotic ardor, heroism, lofty achievement, and multiplied honors in military affairs are concerned, he stands among the foremost of the land.

Nor has his career since the overthrow of the Rebellion, in the same field of activity, been less conspicuous and noteworthy, nor less meritorious than before. Abating no jot or tittle of his military sagacity, prowess, or ardor, he yet has honored himself and the place of his nativity by exhibiting, in his dealings with, and treatment of, the Indian wards of the nation, a degree of common sense, practical wisdom, humane feeling, and Christian principle, alike creditable to both his head and his heart. For this he richly deserves, as he is sure to receive, the sincere gratitude of every high-minded, patriotic citizen of the Republic, and of every friend and lover of his kind to the ends of the earth. He has not only planned and successfully executed numerous difficult and dangerous campaigns with the most warlike, treacherous, and artful of the remaining aboriginal tribes of the country, opening up vast sections of territory to the advances of civilized life and guaranteeing peace, security, and contentment to those who might be pleased to occupy them, but has gained in a large degree the confidence of the Indians themselves, who, while admiring and fearing him for his bravery and skill, respect his manly honesty and sincerity of purpose, and esteem him as a wise counsellor and faithful friend,—one who, ready to fight and able to conquer them when their turbulence and bloody designs require it, is yet disposed and determined to treat them fairly and honorably in his personal intercourse with them, and to secure for them, as far as in him lies, justice, equity, and fidelity to pledged troth on the part of the government and peo-





ple of the nation which he represents. By his wise counsels and considerate action he has done much to bring order out of confusion in the perplexing arena of Indian affairs, to solve a long vexed problem of our American life, establish and promote a sound policy in this department of the public service, and to prepare the way for the ultimate citizenship of the rude sons of the forest, and for a permanent peace throughout all our western borders.

Gen. Miles now holds the position of Maj. Gen. in the regular U. S. Army, with a fair prospect of attaining, ere many years, that of Lieut. Gen., which is the crown of rank and fame in that behalf. His residence at present is in Chicago, Ill. His wife is niece of Gen. and Senator Sherman, and they have two children. [For particulars of ancestry, etc., see Genealogical Department in proper place.]

MILLER, CYRUS K., s. of Jonas and Susan, b. W. June 5, 1838; a teacher, unm. Enl. at Rockport, Ill., in Co. B, 28th Regt., Ill. Vols., belonging to the Army of Tennessee. In battles at Pittsburgh Landing, Ft. Donelson, Shiloh, Ft. Henry, Corinth, Pea Ridge, and siege of Vicksburg. Prom. for meritorious service from ord. sergt. to 1st lieut. Aug. 17, 1862. Stricken with fever at Vicksburg and sent to the hosp., he d. July 8, 1863, the day of the surrender of Port Hudson.

MILLER, EDWARD P., bro. of the last, b. W. Mar. 16, 1834; farmer. Enl. on Princeton quota Nov. 6, 1861, and must. as corp. into Co. A, 32d Regt., F. J. Parker, Col. Sharing the fortunes of his comrades for a few months, his health failed him, resulting in his disch. Dec. 10, 1862.

PAGE, CHARLES H., s. of Major and Dorinda, b. W. Feb. 8, 1838; farmer, unm. Enl. at Barre, Vt., Apr., 1861, in Co. F, 3d Regt., Vt. Vols. Severely wounded in right arm in a skirmish at Lee's Mills, Jan., 1862, necessitating amputation and causing his disch. from the service.

RAY, FRANCIS N., s. of Ivers and Clarissa, b. W. May 27, 1840; teamster, unm. Enl. in Co. A, 53d Regt., on Fg. quota Oct. 17, 1862, and served as corp. in the battles of Bisland and Port Hudson, La. Must. out at expn. of 9 mos.' time, Sept. 2, 1863.

RAYMOND, OREN T., s. of Charles H. and Maria C., b. Fg. Sept. 5, 1845; farmer, unm. Enl. at Fg. on the quota of that city Feb. 18, 1864, and joined Co. F, 57th Regt., Wm. F. Bartlett, Col. The first battle in which he was engaged was that of the Wilderness, where he was killed May 6th.

RICE, JOSEPH P., a sometime resident of W., after whom Post 69 G. A. R. was named, was s. of Joseph and Susan (Balcolm) Rice, b. Ash. Mar. 10, 1821. Early showed military spirit and became Capt. of Ash. Light Infantry, and subsequently Col. of 9th Regt., Mass. Militia. When the Rebellion broke out he tendered his Regt. to Gov. Andrew for service at the front, but for some unknown reason the offer was declined. He was, however, made Capt. of Co. H, 21st Regt., M. V., Aug. 21, 1861, prom. to Maj. Feb. 28, 1862, and to lieut. Col., May 16th following. While making a reconnaissance at Chantilly, Sept. 1st, he received a fatal shot, dying instantly. To bravery and courage he is said to have added manliness of character and kindness of heart.

SAMPSON, DAVID, s. of Oliver and Susan, b. W. Aug. 5, 1827; merchant. Enl. Sept. 1, 1863, at Jamestown, N. Y., where he resided, on quota of Elliott, in Co. F, 112th Regt., N. Y. Vols. Engaged at Deserted Farm, Franklin, Cold Harbor, Bermuda Hundred, Fort Fisher, etc. Entered service as private and was prom. in regular order to 2d sergt., 1st sergt., 2d lieut., 1st lieut., Capt. In hosp. 20 days after surrender of Lee; disch. June 13, 1865, war having closed.

SAMPSON, LUCIUS W., bro. of the last, b. W. Oct. 4, 1839. Enl. Aug., 1861, at Jamestown, N. Y., in Co. G, 49th Regt., N. Y. Vols. Served as private in Peninsular campaign, and in battles before Richmond under Gen. McClellan. Receiving a sunstroke was sent to hosp. at Fort Monroe, where he was disch. for disab. Dec. 20, 1862; d. of disease contracted in the service Jan. 14, 1863.





SAUNDERS, JOSEPH E., s. of Amos and Lucy, b. W. Apr. 25, 1842. Enl. at Concord, N. H., for 3 yrs. Sept. 9, 1861, in Co. E, 1st Regt., N. H. Sharpshooters, under the command of the celebrated Col. Berden. In most of battles of the Army of the Potomac during 1862 and 1863; disch. Sept. 8, 1864, at expn. of time. Re-enl. at unknown date, his final disch. occurring after the close of the war, Aug., 1865. In hosp. at Phila. 3 mos.; d. at Penna-cook, N. H., Nov. 21, 1885.

SAWIN, LUTHER J., s. of Jonathan and Mary Ann, b. W. Sept. 24, 1846. Enl. at Woodland, Me., his place of residence, Nov., 1863, in Co. E, 1st Regt., H. A. Me. Vols. In battle of the Wilderness, May 5-13, 1864, etc. Taken sick and d. at Ft. Schuyler, N. Y., Sept., 1864.

SAWIN, SANFORD M., bro. of the last, b. Londonderry, Vt., July 30, 1836; architect and builder. Enl. at Houlton, Me., in Co. —, 7th Regt., Me. Vols., subsequently transferred to 11th N. Y. Cav., and finally to Gen. Daniel Ullman's Brig., serving, for an unexplained reason, under an assumed name. In battles of 2d Bull Run and Port Hudson. Served some time on med. staff, ranking as hosp. steward, though acting as asst. surgeon; resigned his position and was disch. for disab. near the close of 1864. By some untoward accident "he had 4 ribs and left clavicle broken," also was "sick with the measles at Baltimore and had typhoid malaria at Fort Hudson." In the returned "Circular" he announces a forthcoming history of his apparently eventful and evidently peculiar life, and signs himself Dr. S. M. Sawin (architect and builder).

SMITH, GEORGE M., s. of Charles and Emeline A., b. W. Enl. in Co. F, 2d Regt., H. A., Jones Frankle, Col., Oct. 8, 1863, and served as corp. until his disch. at the expn. of war, May 18, 1865. He was cred. to the quota of Boston.

SMITH, ORANGE F., bro. of the last, b. W. Enl. and must. as corp. on the quota of Fg. July 22, 1862, in Co. A, 36th Regt. In the Vicksburg campaign and other battles of his Regt., Wilderness, Spottsylvania, North Anna, etc.; disch. June 8, 1865, close of war.

UPHAM, CALVIN H., s. of Alvin and Mary, b. W. Feb. 18, 1828; rem. to Niles, Mich., in 1848; in 1853 settled in Racine, Wis., representing the place in the State Legislature in 1861. He went into the army three yrs. later and was appointed Commissary of Subsistence for the Dept. of W. Louisiana by Pres. Lincoln, March 2, 1864. His health became somewhat impaired and he was at two different times in hosp. at Brashear City, La. Served till the war closed, returning to Racine in Aug., 1865. After a residence of a few years in Shawano, Wis., he rem. to Ripon in 1877, where he afterward remained. Has held several important local offices, and was P. M. of the city under Pres. Arthur. He d. Feb. 27, 1892. (See Genealogical Dept., Uphem.)

UPHAM, WILLIAM H., bro. of the last, b. W. May 3, 1841. His boyhood was spent in this town and his education began in the public school of the village. When about 11 yrs. of age he rem. with his parents to Niles, Mich., and thence, after the death of his father, to Racine, Wis., where he resided with his mother. Upon the breaking out of the war he enl. in the Belle City Rifles, 2d Regt., Wis. Vols., which went to the vicinity of Washington in season to participate in the disastrous battle at Bull Run, July 21, 1861. He was shot through the lungs during the engagement and left on the field for dead. News to that effect reaching his home, he was mourned by his relatives and friends as one passed on to the eternal world. The press had long and eulogistic biographical notices of him, and an eloquent funeral sermon was preached in one of the Racine churches, highly commendatory of his character and career. It was printed in full in the morning paper of the following day, and he carefully preserves a copy of it as a memento of those stirring times and a testimony of the esteem with which he was regarded by those who knew him well.



Seven months after this transpired, it was found that the supposed-to-be dead soldier had been confined all the while in Libby prison, whither he was taken from the battlefield and held as captive in war, and whence he had been liberated on parole, having recovered from his apparently fatal wound. Reporting himself at Washington, he was sent for by President Lincoln, under the presumption that he might be able to impart valuable information in regard to the state of affairs among the Confederates, which proved to be the case. Mr. Lincoln was much pleased with the appearance of the youth and used his personal influence to secure for him a coveted position as cadet at West Point, from which institution he graduated with honor at the completion of the prescribed course of study. He was at once assigned to the rank of lieutenant in the regular U. S. army, and it is a singular fact that the first duty he had to perform in that capacity was to act as guard of Jeff. Davis, then confined as prisoner at Fortress Monroe.

After ten years connection with the army, Lieut. Upham gave up his commission and, retiring to his adopted state, has since devoted himself to the development of large business enterprises in northern Wisconsin. He has been the leading spirit in building up the flourishing town of Marshfield, being the head of the Upham Manufacturing Co., the principal industrial concern of the place, which is engaged in the production of lumber, furniture, flour, etc., and in general merchandry, employing several hundred men, whose pay roll amounts to a quarter of a million dollars per year.

Mr. Upham has given some attention to political affairs, being an earnest member of the Republican party, in whose councils he is well known and has great influence, though up to the present date he has declined the offer of candidacy for any important and responsible public office, preferring to devote his time and energy to the carrying out to a successful issue certain great industrial undertakings in which he is engaged, rather than assume the cares and wear the honors to which his political friends have been ready to call him. Maj. Upham resides in the town he has done so much to create and make prosperous, Marshfield, Wis., having an interesting family consisting of a wife, *nee* Mary Kelley, and two children. Domestic is he in his tastes and of high character and moral worth.

WHEELER, JOSIAH PAGE, s. of Lewis and Mary (Stowell) Wheeler, b. W. May 26, 1832; unm. Enl. at New Ipswich, N. H., in 4th N. H. Regt., Sept. 13, 1861; was taken prisoner and confined awhile at Andersonville; being released he served under Sherman in the first part of his "March to the Sea." Killed in Georgia in R. R. accident, Sept. 13, 1864.

WOOD, EDWIN A., s. of Asaph and Susan, b. W. Nov. 29, 1826. Res. in W. till 19 yrs. of age, then in Gr. and Fg. till 1850, when he located in Worc. Joined the State Militia about that date, holding nearly every position in the "City Guards" from private to Capt. In Sept., 1862, raised a Co. of Vols. for 9 mos.' service, the leading Co. in the 51st Regt., under Col. Sprague, of which he was commissioned Capt., serving till the expn. of time, being must. out July 27, 1863. Regt. attached to 18th Army Corps and stationed in N. C. most of the time, otherwise in Va. and Md. On duty every day during the entire time of service. Since the war, has been connected with Worc. Continentals as Adj. or Capt. from the date of organization, 1876, to the present time, 1891.

**The Soldier's Monument.** In the warrant calling the annual town meeting, March 6, 1865, appeared an article

"To see what action the Town will take in relation to erecting a monument in memory of its soldiers who have died or may die in the service of our country in the present war."

The consideration of this article resulted in the appointment of Joseph Hager, James Puffer, and Jonas Miller, as a committee





"To gather all the necessary facts and information and at the proper time erect or cause to be erected a suitable monument in memory of all soldiers belonging to this Town, or whose parents belong here, who have died or may die in the service of our country in the present war.

*"Voted,* To instruct the above Com. to procure plans and estimates and present [them] to the town for action before erecting said monument."

At a meeting held Nov. 7th, following, a report was made accordingly. Whereupon it was

*"Voted,* To instruct said Com. to procure a suitable granite monument.

*"Voted,* To instruct said Com. to locate said monument in the centre village."

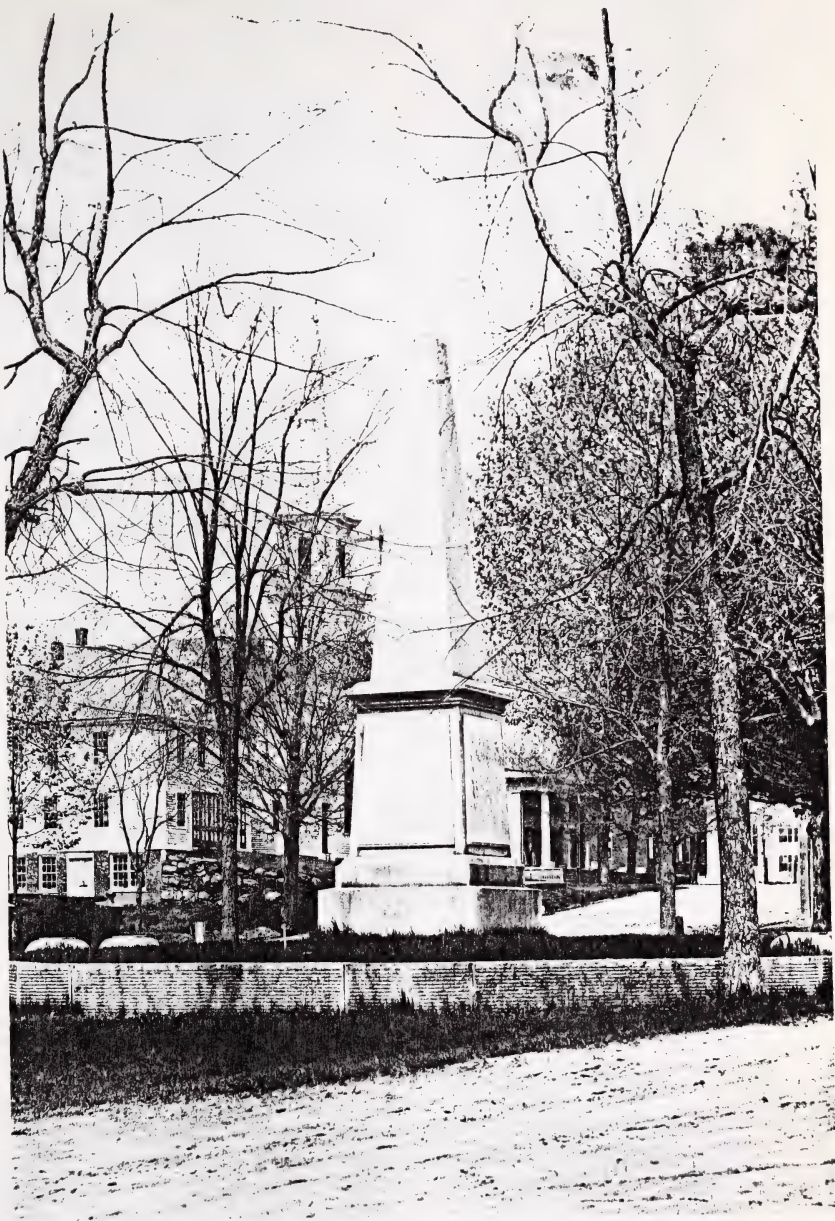
The committee proceeded to act in accordance with these votes, causing the structure to be put up in the open area in front of the Church of the First Parish. As it drew near completion, the town was called upon to take action in respect to the proper dedication of the same. The matter was referred to the "Monument Committee," enlarged by the addition of John Minott, Joel Merriam, George Miles, Amos B. Holden, Clinton Warner, A. E. Drury, Charles Upton, and Leander Hartwell, with full power to do what seemed to them to be proper and best, and to draw on the treasurer for money to defray the expenses incurred thereby. These gentlemen attended to the duty assigned them and, under their general direction, the contemplated event took place July 4, 1868. The introductory exercises of the occasion were held on the grounds where the structure was located, the programme being as follows:

1. Music by the band; 2. Prayer by Rev. R. S. Johnson;
3. Singing of an ode written for the occasion by Mrs. Ann C. Roper; 4. Address by Rev. Henry Cummings of Rutland; 5. Reading of a poem written by M. Elizabeth Whitney.

A procession was then formed of the large assemblage present, which proceeded under the lead of the local military organization, Wachusett Rifle Company, A. E. Drury, *captain*, to the Bigelow grove, where formal services befitting the event were resumed and continued in the order named:

1. Prayer by Rev. A. J. Rich; 2. Reading of the report of the action of the monument committee by the chairman, Capt. A. B. Holden, and the presentation of important papers relating thereto, to the chairman of the board of selectmen; 3. Response by the latter, Edward Bacon; 4. Collation; 5. Music; 6. Oration by Rev. Joseph Peckham of Kingston; 7. Reading of selections from original poem by Dea. Robert Peckham, eighty-three years of age; 8. Address by Gen. J. W. Kimball of Fitchburg; 9. Singing of an ode written by Calvin Whitney; 10. Poem by Rev. A. J. Rich; 11. Address by Hon. Joel Merriam; 12. Benediction.





SOLDIERS' MONUMENT.





The monument is a substantial, unpretending, but appropriate structure, made of Fitchburg granite and consisting of a solid, square base and pedestal with relieving fillets, surmounted by a pyramidal shaft sloping gently upward to the height of 22 1-2 feet from the ground. On the four sides of the pedestal are marble slabs bearing an inscription and the names, rank, place and date of death of the thirty-four patriot sons of the town, who, at the time of its erection were known to have perished in their country's service—the whole being surrounded by an octagonal stone curbing. The inscription is presented below with the names simply of the men, in the order in which they appear upon the several tablets. The details of their military record have been chronicled on the preceding pages of this chapter.

*Front Side.*

In memory of the patriotic volunteers of Westminster whose lives were sacrificed in defence of Liberty and Union during the great Rebellion.

LIEUT. COL. JOSEPH P. RICE,	LIEUT. COL. CHARLES CUMMINGS,
LIEUT. CYRUS K. MILLER,	ORD. SERGT. MARCUS J. HAGER,
SERGT. ISRAEL CUMMINGS,	SERGT. GEORGE H. PAGE.
CORP. PATRICK KELLEY.	

*Northeast Side.*

SERGT. WALTER H. SAWTELLE,	CORP. FARWELL SAWIN,
CORP. CHARLES A. MILLER,	CORP. SAMUEL H. PECKHAM,
FRANCIS BLAKE,	HARRISON P. SAWIN,
GEORGE W. MILLER,	GEORGE C. NICHOLS,
FRANCIS ESTEY.	

*Southeast Side.*

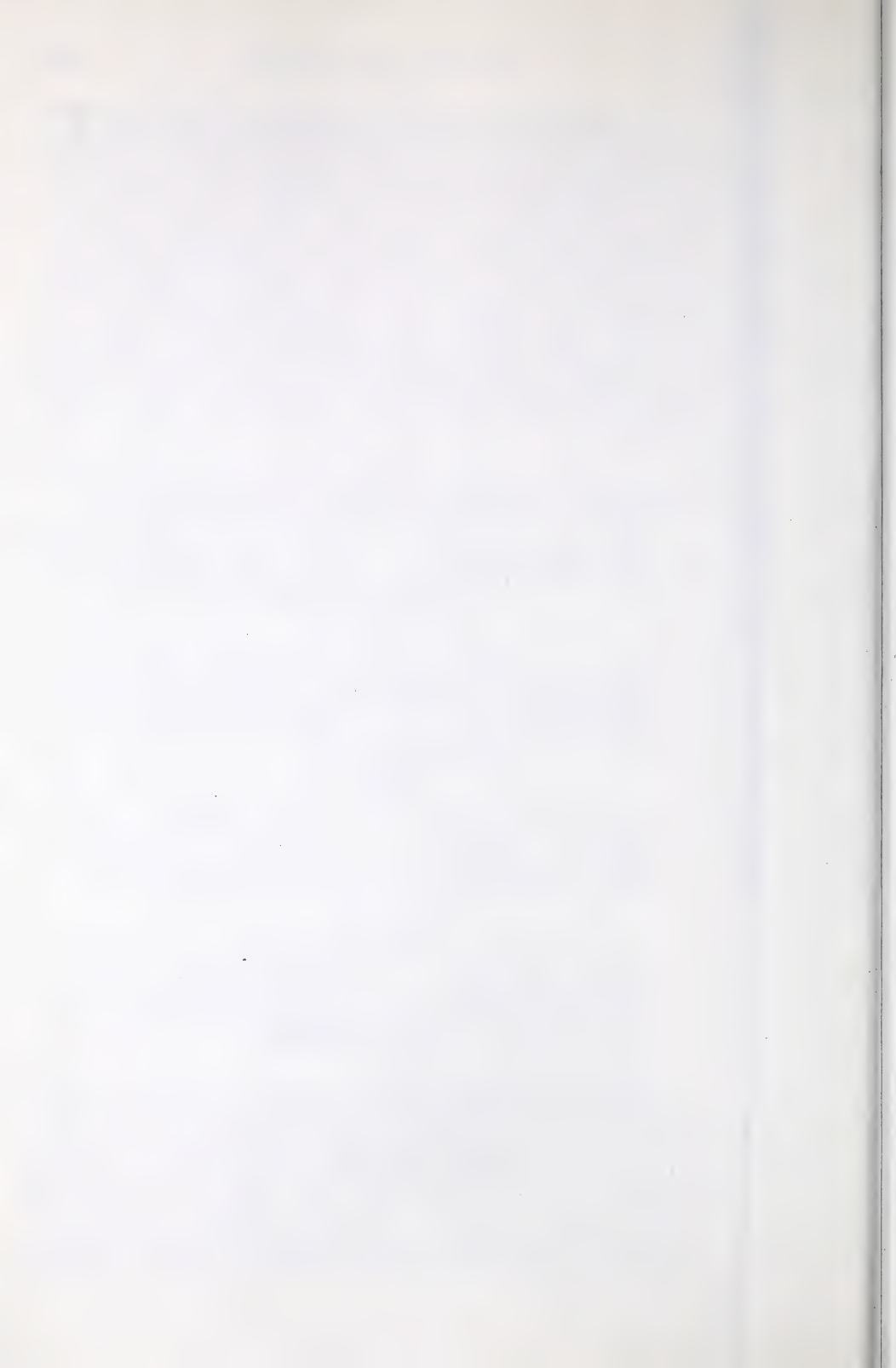
HORACE S. WOODWARD,	HENRY J. CUTTING,
EDWARD O. YOUNG,	JOSIAH FOSTER,
CHARLES H. HARTWELL,	WALLACE W. BUTTERFIELD,
GEORGE F. BENJAMIN,	OREN T. RAYMOND,
THOMAS SCOLLAY, JR.	

*Southwest Side.*

NELSON Z. BATHRICK,	JAMES E. PUFFER,
GEORGE W. FINDALL,	ALBERT E. BROOKS,
BENJAMIN F. WILCOX,	AMOS H. PARTRIDGE,
JOHN W. HOWE,	MARCUS M. COOLEGE,
AUGUSTUS PETTS.	

Before concluding the present chapter it is proper to make a record of the several semi-military associations that have been formed since the close of the war, for the purpose of commemorating the heroic achievements won in the conflict, of fostering the spirit of patriotic devotion to the Republic, of promoting kindly feeling and good fellowship among surviving comrades, and of providing, in charity's great name, for the comfort and need of any of their number who may lack the essentials





of human welfare and happiness. The most important of these is the

**JOSEPH P. RICE POST 69, G. A. R.**

This body, respectable in numbers and in standing, was organized Nov. 28, 1868, pursuant to orders from the headquarters of the G. A. R., Dept. of Mass., Gen. A. B. R. Sprague, commander. The charter members were Amos B. Holden, Abner E. Drury, Adin F. Baker, Edward P. Banks, Edward P. Miller, Lyman M. Drury, Alvin O. Stickney, J. Hervey Miller, Hobart Raymond, Marcus M. Miller, and Ethan W. Holden. The first commander was Amos B. Holden. Regular meetings are held on Saturday evenings.

The Post was named in honor of Lieut. Col. Joseph P. Rice, a native of Ashburnham, who was for many years a respected citizen of the town. He was in command of his regiment, the Twenty-first, at the battle of Chantilly, Va., and was killed while leading his men in a charge, Sept. 1, 1862.

Decoration day was first observed by the comrades in 1868, and has been regularly celebrated year by year since, the exercises, from 1870 to the present time, consisting of an address appropriate to the occasion, with accompanying devotional, literary, and patriotic services, garlanding the monument with flowers and evergreen, and visiting the several cemeteries where similar tokens of respect and love are shown the graves of departed heroes. The number thus honored in 1868 was some twenty-eight; in 1888 it was fifty-one, including four in which repose the remains of soldiers of the Revolution, Col. John Rand, Capt. Aaron Bolton, Ebenezer Mann, and Jonas Holden.

At the annual town meeting in 1871 the sum of \$25.00 was voted to defray the expenses of Decoration day, to be used under the direction of the Post, and in 1883 the amount was increased to \$50.00, with \$5.00 additional for the care of the monument grounds, and this appropriation has been continued annually to the present day.

The elm trees about the monument were planted by the Post in 1873, and in 1883 the four cannon in front and at the rear were received and put in place, having been donated to the organization by special act of Congress, through the kindly intervention of Ex-Gov. John D. Long, M. C. The Post has attained an honorable reputation for the fraternal spirit which characterizes its members and the cheerful helpfulness manifested not only to comrades, but to their wives and children in time of need. Its charity fund during its existence has been more than \$400.00, its expenditure ranging from nothing to \$95.00 per year.

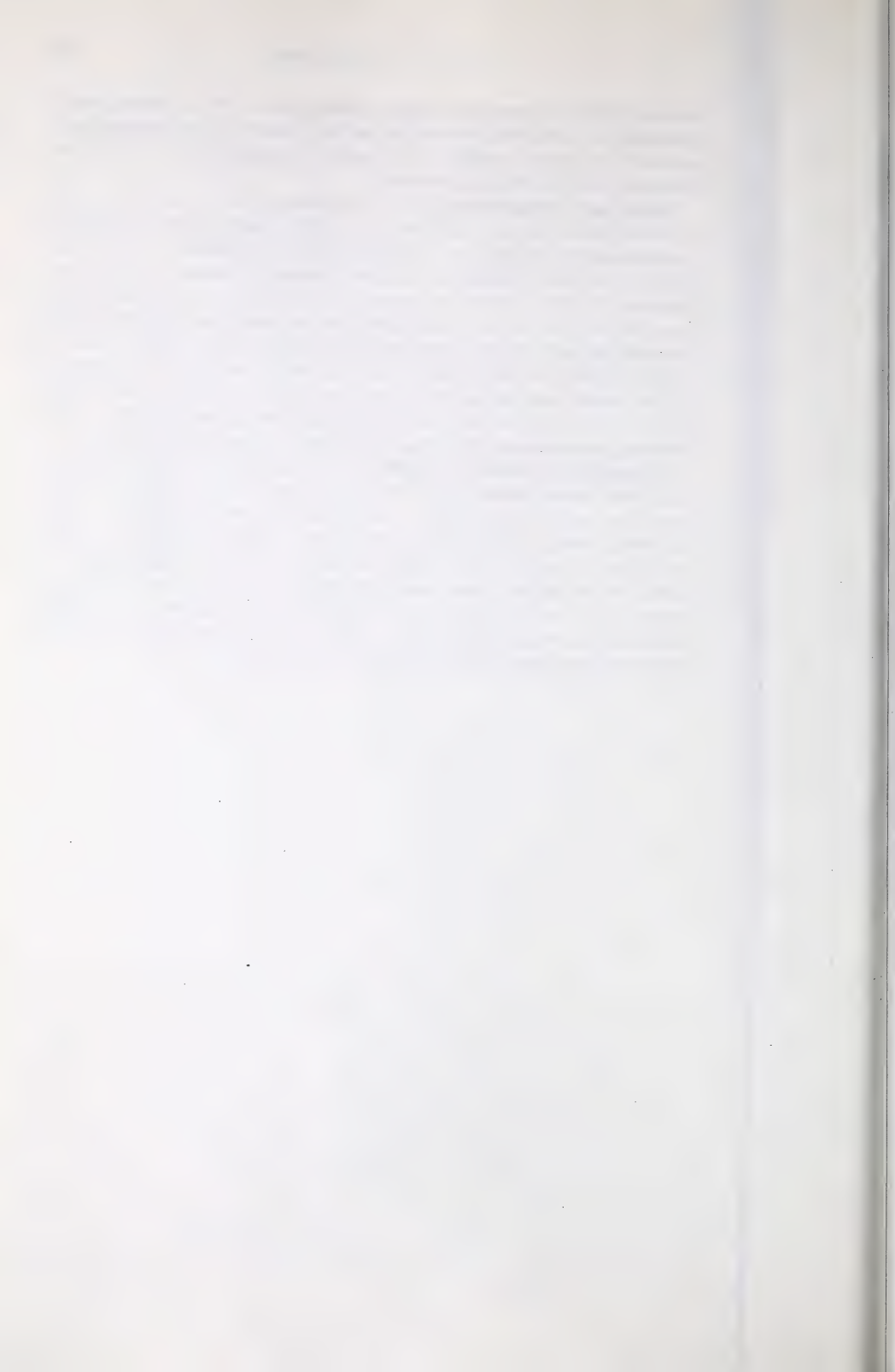
A convenient and attractive hall on the upper floor of the town hall building, with desirable anterooms, has been fitted up and furnished for the special uses of the Post. Its walls are



adorned with a large and choice collection of fine photographic portraits of departed comrades and of some of the leading generals of the great conflict, to whom the apartment is in an important sense a fitting memorial.

**Sons of Veterans.** A subordinate branch of this order was instituted on the 29th of May, 1889, with Frank E. Miller as captain, and Charles L. Mansur, first lieutenant. Its membership is duly indicated in the name it bears. Its object appears to be to honor the name and memory of the fathers of those belonging to it—the loyal and valiant men who perilled life and all for the preservation of the Republic in the time of its great need, to keep alive the fires of patriotism in the breast of the sons, and to help make perpetual on these shores the institutions and blessings of civil and religious liberty. The present commander is Louis S. Miller. Membership, fifty.

**Woman's Relief Corps.** This body, designated as No. 115, was established Jan. 29, 1890, with Mrs. Hobart Raymond as the first president. It is auxiliary to Post 69, G. A. R., its work being chiefly of a benevolent nature, directed to the relief and comfort of needy soldiers and their families. Its membership, which now numbers about ninety persons, is drawn from all classes in the community, any woman above a specified age being privileged to join it. Mrs. J. T. Marshall is the present president, and Miss May B. Hager, secretary.





## CHAPTER XXI.

### SUNDRY MATTERS OF PUBLIC CONCERN.

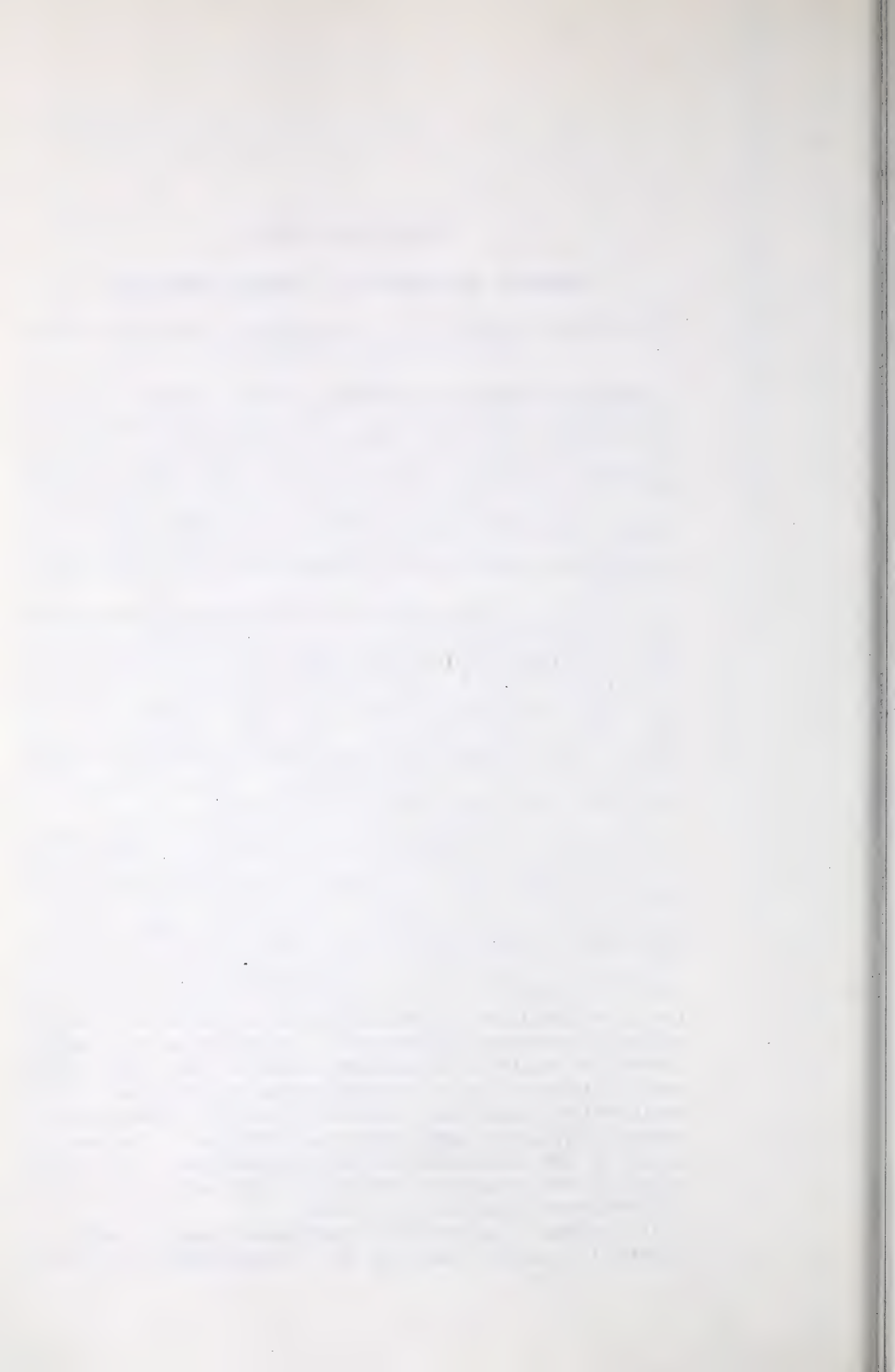
TERRITORIAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, ASSOCIATIVE, MORTUARY, ETC.—  
GALA DAYS AND CELEBRATIONS.

**Surveys, Plans, and Maps.** The original survey of the township was made in the year 1728 by a committee of the Provincial Legislature chosen for the purpose, under circumstances sufficiently detailed in an early chapter of this work. Upon that survey the grant of lands represented by it to the first proprietors was based. The report of it to the General Court was accompanied by an outline plan, giving measurements and area, still preserved among the State papers at Boston.

A second survey was effected by the dividing committee of the proprietors in the spring of 1734, in connection with their labors in laying out the first division lots. A corresponding plan, giving a view of the work done, was drawn at that time, upon which was duly indicated the second division of lands, made seven years afterward. This plan, preserved by the clerks of the township and town, is still in existence, though in a much worn and mutilated condition. It has, however, been reproduced, and a copy secured for this work.

When the third division of lands was made in 1751, under the direction of John Miles, surveyor, he drew an outline plan of the township, but did not represent upon it the result of the labors of which he had charge, little more than the boundaries and measurements being given. This plan was found among a multitude of loose papers in an old chest at the Town House. Though covering the same territory as did the plan of the Legislative committee, there was a marked difference between the two in the length of the boundary lines and in the area of the whole, as the figures plainly show. According to the original survey, the length of the northern side was 2,825 rods; of the eastern, 2,240 rods; of the southeastern, 850 rods; and of the southwestern, 2,340 rods. Mr. Miles made the measurements, respectively, 3,051, 2,436, 1,020, and 2,600 rods. The area, as stated by the committee of the General Court, was 23,286 acres, 85 rods; as given by Mr. Miles, 28,811 acres, 85 rods, — a difference of 5,524 acres, 155 rods.

In the year 1794 the State Legislature passed a resolve requiring the several towns of the Commonwealth to cause a



survey of their respective territories to be made by a competent person, who should draw a plan of the same, indicating thereon the general natural features — hills, ponds, streams, forests, etc., — together with the existing roads, mill sites, and other tokens of its condition, to be lodged with the Secretary of the State for permanent public preservation and use. Pursuant thereto, Westminster, Sept. 11, 1794,

“Voted, To give Mr. Silas Beaman £12 to take an accurate survey of the town and return one Plan into the Clerk’s office of the town and one into the Secretary’s of the Commonwealth.”

This vote was carried into effect. The home plan is not to be found; that of the State Secretary is extant and in good condition.

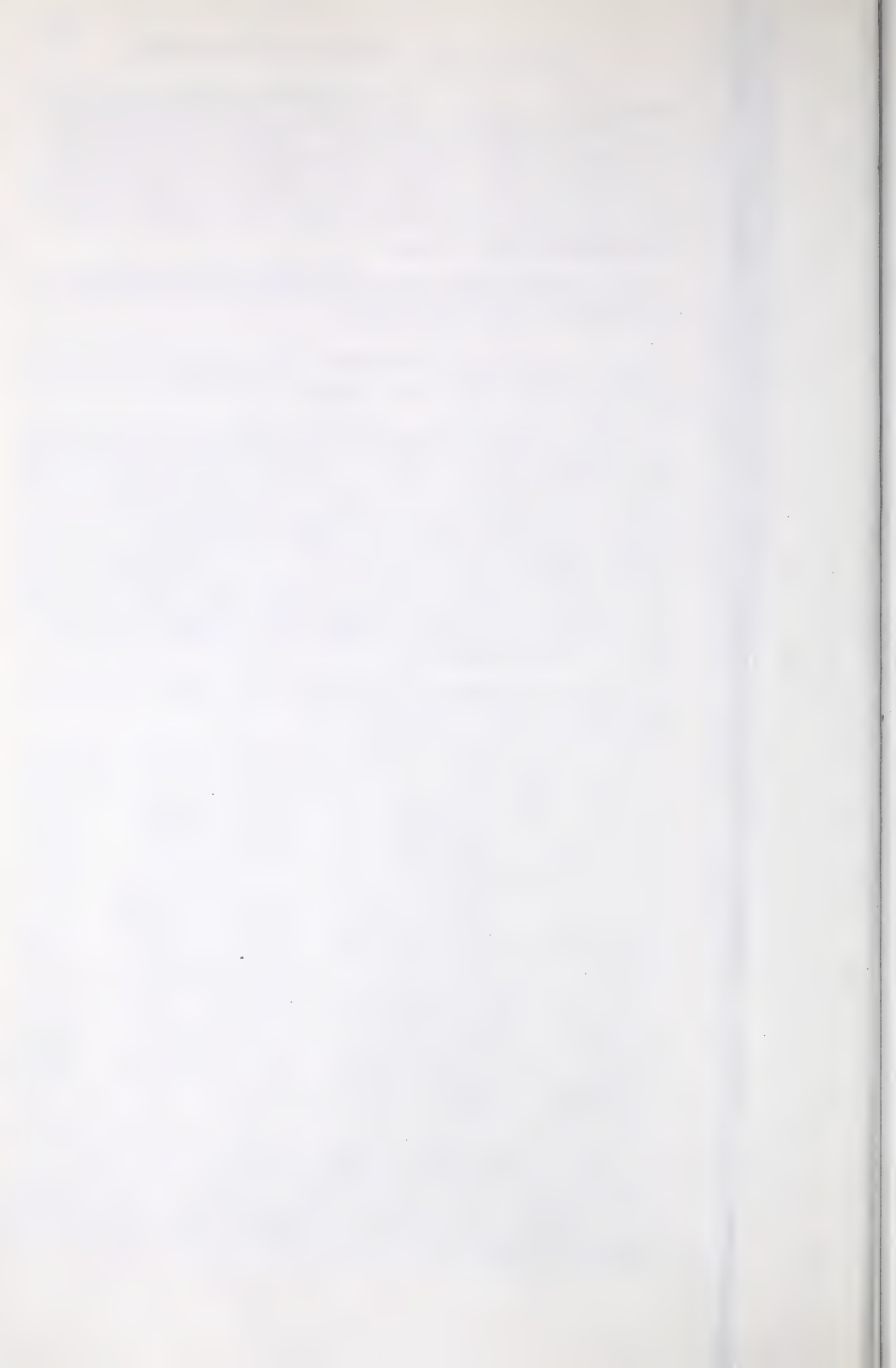
A similar resolve was passed by the General Court of 1830, and on May 3d of that year the town appointed Benjamin F. Wood, Wonder Wears, and Timothy Doty a committee to take charge of the matter and secure the ends proposed. Their action is supposed to have been final, as they made no report of their doings to their constituency. The work is understood to have been done by Arad Moore, son of Joshua, a then recent graduate of Amherst College, an extract from whose field book was copied into the pamphlet history of Westminster, prepared by Rev. Charles Hudson soon afterward, and recopied here.

“Beginning at the point where Westminster corners on Gardner and Hubbardston the line runs as follows:—

COURSE.	DISTANCE.		COURSE.	DISTANCE.		COURSE.	DISTANCE.	
	<i>Chns.</i>	<i>Lks.</i>		<i>Chns.</i>	<i>Lks.</i>		<i>Chns.</i>	<i>Lks.</i>
S. 40° E.	367	00	S. 16° 45' E.	7	00	Due South	30	25
N. 52° 30' E.	250	43	S. 74° 15' W.	68	50	S. 40° W.	13	40
N. 10° E.	193	17	N. 18° 45' W.	7	11	S. 88° W.	6	50
S. 78° 30' E.	28	25	S. 75° 45' W.	6	50	S. 1° W.	7	20
N. 10° E.	33	00	N. 17° 15' E.	2	21	S. 38° W.	40	00
N. 74° 20' W.	2	83	S. 70° 30' W.	69	50	N. 42° 30' W.	4	25
N. 81° 20' W.	6	75	S. 19° 30' E.	40	00	S. 49° 30' W.	14	22
N. 56° 20' W.	8	40	S. 33° 30' W.	55	00	S. 39° 30' E.	7	00
N. 68° 50' W.	2	17	S. 87° 30' W.	23	25	S. 48° W.	28	50
N. 67° 50' W.	12	60	S. 3° 30' E.	20	00	S. 39° E.	4	00
N. 10° E.	398	00	S. 87° E.	4	75	S. 51° W.	47	42
S. 70° 30' W.	108	00	S. 39° 20' W.	8	00	S. 40° E.	25	00
S. 14° 40' E.	15	43	Due South	14	00	S. 47° W.	30	00
S. 73° 50' W.	13	69	N. 89° W.	12	00	N. 40° W.	10	50
S. 16° E.	6	13	S. 39° W.	5	00	S. 39° W.	53	75
S. 74° 45' W.	40	00	N. 2° 30' W.	4	00	N. 41° W.	9	75
N. 16° 15' E.	7	75	S. 85° 30' W.	19	36	S. 47° W.	26	00
S. 74° 15' W.	13	75						

A plan or map based on this survey, with much detailed information, is also preserved in the archives of the State.

A survey of the town was made in 1855 by C. M. Hopkins, Jr., C. E., under the auspices of Richard Clark of Philadelphia. Though not mathematically correct, it was sufficiently so for all



practical purposes, and a map executed on a scale of three and a half inches to the mile was prepared from it, which was tastefully mounted and distributed by sale among the inhabitants. Upon it were represented not only the territorial boundaries and the more important natural features—hills, lowlands, streams, ponds, forests, etc., with the highways and school districts,—but the sites of dwellings and occupied water-privileges, to which the owner's or resident's names were attached. Also, pictorial views of two churches, several private homesteads and manufacturing establishments. Many of these maps are to be found to-day among the older families of the place.

A later map, claiming to have been made from actual surveys, was prepared for an Atlas of Worcester County by F. W. Beers & Co., New York City, about the year 1870, and can be seen in the principal libraries of the Commonwealth as well as elsewhere. It has plans of the Center and Wachusettville, and the location of dwelling houses, mills, shops, etc., but no names are attached to these as in the one just mentioned. The one appearing in this volume is substantially a reproduction of this, with such additions and emendations as suit it to the present date.

**Changes and Divisions.** The first departure from the original configuration of the town was made at the time of the incorporation of Gardner in the year 1785, as described on page 198.

On the 28th of September, 1795, the town "voted to admit of Mr. Noah Wiswall and his lands to be annexed to Westminster, provided he is set off from Fitchburg." In the following year Mr. Wiswall presented a petition to the General Court, asking to be transferred as indicated, which request was granted on the 27th of February. Thenceforward the petitioner was regarded as a citizen in good and regular standing of Westminster, being taxed as such, voting, holding office, and acting otherwise in that capacity. As a matter of fact, however, Mr. Wiswall's farm was never a part of Fitchburg, but was included in that tract of unincorporated land known as "No-town," which was partitioned off to several adjoining towns in 1838, as presently stated. In the map of the town based on the Moore survey of 1831, this property was not represented at all, indicating that it was not considered at that date as belonging to Westminster.

On the 16th of February, 1813, Thomas Miles, who had recently purchased an old tavern stand on the Fifth Massachusetts Turnpike in the southwestern part of Fitchburg, with a large farm attached, was, upon his own petition, set off to Westminster. The territory lay to the eastward of the estates of Alonzo Curtis and the late Daniel Miles, and is readily recognized on the map in a nearly square form bounded partly upon the river. Its reassignment to its original municipal belongings has been recently proposed and will, no doubt, be effected at an early day.





At a legal meeting of the town held April 7, 1823, the citizens were asked to vote upon the question of consenting to have the residences and estates of John Ward and William Barrell, together with certain lands belonging to Ohio Whitney and Samuel Whitney, set off to Ashburnham, the two former transferring thither their citizenship. The proposition was met with a decisive negative. Nevertheless, the parties interested, not to be diverted from their purpose, petitioned the General Court, which appointed a hearing of the case. Jonas Whitney, Simeon Sanderson, and Timothy Doty appeared in behalf of the town to oppose the measure, but their efforts were unavailing, and on the 28th of July a resolve was passed making the desired transfer. By this enactment Westminster lost several hundred acres of her territory and two substantial citizens. John G. Woodward and Charles Whitney of Ashburnham now represent the greater part of the transferred landed property, as they do the two families more immediately concerned.

An act of the Legislature signed by Robert C. Winthrop, Speaker of the House, and Myron Lawrence, President of the Senate, and approved by Gov. Edward Everett, April 10, 1838, divided the unincorporated "No-town" lands into three parts, assigning them to Westminster, Fitchburg, and Leominster,—the entire westerly portion, with two houses upon it, one being the old Wiswall homestead, coming to this town. This tract was described and bounded as follows: Beginning at a large rock at an angle between "No-town" and Westminster, thence S. 68° 12' E., 44 rods to stake and stones; N. 54° 15' E., 88 rods; S. 70° 25' E., 126 rods; S. 17° 20' E., 70½ rods; S. 50° 30' E., 100 rods; N. 14° E., length not given, but about six hundred and fifty rods; N. 78° 40' W., 411 rods; S. 10° W., 600 rods to the first named point. The area was about one thousand four hundred and fifty acres. A small portion of this territory at the southeast corner, across which a road was laid connecting Princeton and Leominster, was assigned to the latter by the Legislature, April 22, 1870. It is described as "all of Westminster that lies south of the northerly line of the road leading from John W. Hadley's to Leominster." This left the town with the same outline and configuration as it has to-day, 1892.

**The Proposed Town of Vernon.** The details of a movement on the part of the inhabitants of contiguous portions of Westminster, Fitchburg, Ashburnham, and Ashby in the latter part of the last century, designed to secure the incorporation of a new township, are given on pages 199–202. A second effort in the same behalf was made in 1815, when a petition was sent to the General Court of similar import to that of thirty years before, asking for an act on the part of that body establishing a municipality bearing the name of Vernon. The document was signed by Jonas Smith and thirty others of West-



minster, comprising most of the voting population residing north of Scrabble Hollow, and sixty-nine from neighboring towns. The petition took its usual course. Westminster was cited to appear and show cause (if any it had) why the prayer of the petitioners should not be granted. A meeting was called on May 8th, at which Solomon Strong, Esq., Abel Wood, Esq., and Jonas Whitney, Esq., were appointed a committee to draw up a remonstrance to be presented to the Legislature, which they accordingly did. The town accepted the document, ordered it to be signed by the clerk in its behalf, and chose Dea. Jones White and Alexander Dustin a committee to have charge of the matter before the Court. They were successful in their efforts; the remonstrance prevailed, and the proposed town of Vernon was never heard of more.

**Everettville.** The little hamlet of half a dozen dwelling houses, with lands and betterments, lying just over the southeast boundary of the town, in Princeton, has been largely identified in various ways with Westminster for more than a hundred years. For this reason a condensed sketch of the place is herewith presented.

Early in the year 1735 Samuel Kneeland, clerk of the whole body of Narragansett Grantees, a Boston printer, petitioned the General Court of the province of Massachusetts Bay for a grant of land, in recognition and part payment of services rendered in helping forward the settlement of certain new townships then recently established. The petition was favorably received, and referred to a committee, who soon reported a bill in accordance therewith, accompanied by a plan of a tract of 500 acres lying southeast of Narragansett No. 2, and bounded partly on that township, partly on Wachusett Pond, and otherwise on common land. The report was adopted, and the lands were conveyed and confirmed to Mr. Kneeland by the approving signature of Governor Belcher, Dec. 29, 1735. Mr. Kneeland remained in possession several years, building a house on the estate and making other improvements, though probably never occupying it as a permanent resident. It was known as "Kneeland's Farm," a name which it bore for a long time. By reason of business embarrassments, Mr. Kneeland was obliged to sell it, and it passed successively through the hands of Samuel Hews of Boston and Edward Wilson of Lancaster to David Osgood, also of Lancaster, who, Oct. 15, 1767, conveyed it to John Bowen of the same town. Mr. Bowen, a man of wealth and respectability, occupied and greatly improved it. Some tokens of his enterprise, skill, and taste are still to be seen there. He was a pronounced loyalist, and when the Revolution broke out he became what was called an "Absentee," having left for parts unknown. His estate was confiscated by the Provincial Government, and sold in 1779 to James Bowers of this town, who, May 30, 1781, resold it to Joshua Everett, also





a citizen here, in whose family it has, for the most part, since remained. In 1794 Mr. Everett and sons petitioned Westminster for annexation thereto. The town "voted to receive them if they can get set off." The proposition did not meet with favor before the Legislature, and was temporarily abandoned. In 1799 it was renewed, with a similar result.

**Division of Worcester County.** The county of Worcester was incorporated by an Act of the General Court April 2, 1731. It then covered substantially the same territory as now, except that it included the town of Woodstock, Conn., which, in the final adjustment of division lines, fell within the borders of "the Nutmeg State." On account of the extent of its territory, and the remoteness of certain portions of it from the shire town, Worcester, numerous attempts have been made during its history to dismember it, or make changes which would obviate the inconveniences and troubles occasioned thereby. In many of these efforts Westminster has borne a more or less important part, as the records show, and as is made to appear in the paragraphs below.

As early as July 26, 1763, at a legal meeting of the citizens,

"It was put to vote to see if they will agree to be sett off into a separate County with ye westerly part of ye County of Worcester and easterly part of the County of Hampshire [then covering the entire western portion of the State], and It passed in the Negative."

Here the matter rested till after the Revolution, June 23, 1784, when it came again before the town, which "voted that a Division of Worcester Co. is necessary," and Colonel Rand, Abner Holden, and Elisha Bigelow were appointed a committee to correspond and confer with committees of other towns in regard to the measure. While this agitation was going on a counter movement was started farther westward, and a petition was presented to the General Court for a new county to be formed of towns partly in Worcester and partly in Hampshire County, as contemplated twenty years before. The people of Westminster did not take kindly to this project, and sent a lengthy remonstrance to the Legislature against it, concluding what they had to say with a request that the entire northern part of Worcester County be erected into a new county, and that the town located nearest the center of the territory be made the shire town, thinking, as some supposed, that Westminster would be crowned with the honors of that position. But these efforts, one and all, came to nothing. In 1791 the town was invited to join other towns in a new movement of the same character. It did so, but with no better success than before. Dec. 22, 1795, the representative at Boston, Ebenezer Jones, was instructed to oppose the setting off of Harvard to Middlesex County. May 12, 1795, Elisha Bigelow was chosen a delegate to a convention to be held at Templeton, "to take



into consideration the division of the County." Nothing more is known of this attempt.

At a session of the General Court held March, 1798, a resolve was passed, directing the Selectmen of the several towns of the county to take measures to ascertain what the views of the people were in regard to a division of the county. The vote of this town was 82 for and 5 against it. In 1800 Abel Wood was chosen delegate to a convention at Templeton called with reference to the subject, and in 1802 Westminster took the initiative in a new effort in the same behalf, enlisting the co-operation of other towns and sending a petition to the Legislature, but without avail. In 1810 and 1811 similar attempts were made with a similar result.

In 1828 a proposition to unite all the northern part of Worcester County with Groton, Shirley, Pepperell, Townsend, and Ashby, in Middlesex, was submitted to the citizens for consideration. The vote was 132 in favor and 9 in opposition to it, but nothing came of this action. In 1851 the matter was before the town again, when it was endorsed by a vote of 109 to 79, and Dr. John White, the Representative, was instructed to advocate the project before the Legislature. Two years later the subject was again presented to the General Court, and a committee of the Senate sent out a rescript to the towns interested for a verdict upon it. The yeas in this town were 155, nays 91. But a year later this decision was reversed, a vote being passed, 115 to 88, to instruct its Representative, George Kendall, to oppose a division.

In 1856 many of the inconveniences and grievances under which several towns in this vicinity had labored, and of which complaint had been made, were practically removed by the passage of an act of the Legislature making Fitchburg a subordinate shire town, in which courts were to be held, and many facilities for the transaction of county business established. This action, followed by the speedy erection of county buildings and the creation in 1884 of a Northern Worcester Registry District, including Westminster, Ashburnham, Fitchburg, Leominster, and Lunenburg, with the greatly increased and constantly increasing facilities for travel and intercommunication, has probably put the question of a division of Worcester County, so far at least as this section of it is concerned, forever at rest. And it is hardly to be expected that any future attempts at dismemberment, from whatever quarter they may come, will be more successful than those that have heretofore sprung up only to die. So may it be.

**Annual Town Meetings.** At the first meeting of the freeholders of the district of Westminster for the transaction of business other than the election of officers, held Dec. 24, 1759, it was "Voted that the Annual Meetings be on the first Monday in March." The time thus fixed at the very outset of



the corporate existence of the municipality was observed with unvarying regularity for more than a hundred years. In the year 1867, however, a change of time was made to the second Monday in April. This did not prove satisfactory, and in 1869 the first Monday in April was substituted with a similar result. At length, by vote taken April 5, 1875, the original date was restored, and the first Monday in March, now as formerly, holds sway over the corporate interests and fortunes of the people for the twelvemonth to come.

**Weights and Measures.** The necessity of having in every community a standard set of these articles for the use of the inhabitants was early recognized by the Provincial Government, and laws were passed requiring towns to make provision for such necessity. In accordance therewith, Westminster voted to procure the same at the meeting mentioned in the last paragraph, Dec. 24, 1759, and the vote was soon carried into effect. After the separation of the colonies from the mother country, the same policy was adopted by the Commonwealth, and the town has never been without these important expedients by which to hold the people to a strict rule of equity and justice in their traffic with each other and with the outside world.

**The Pound.** In the warrant for a meeting of the proprietors of Narragansett No. 2 to take place Nov. 6, 1754, there was an article

"To know their minds whether they will build a Pound to regulate Creatures that are not Regulated as the law Requires and also to prefix a place to set the Same and Committee to build it and a person to keep it."

#### Upon this article

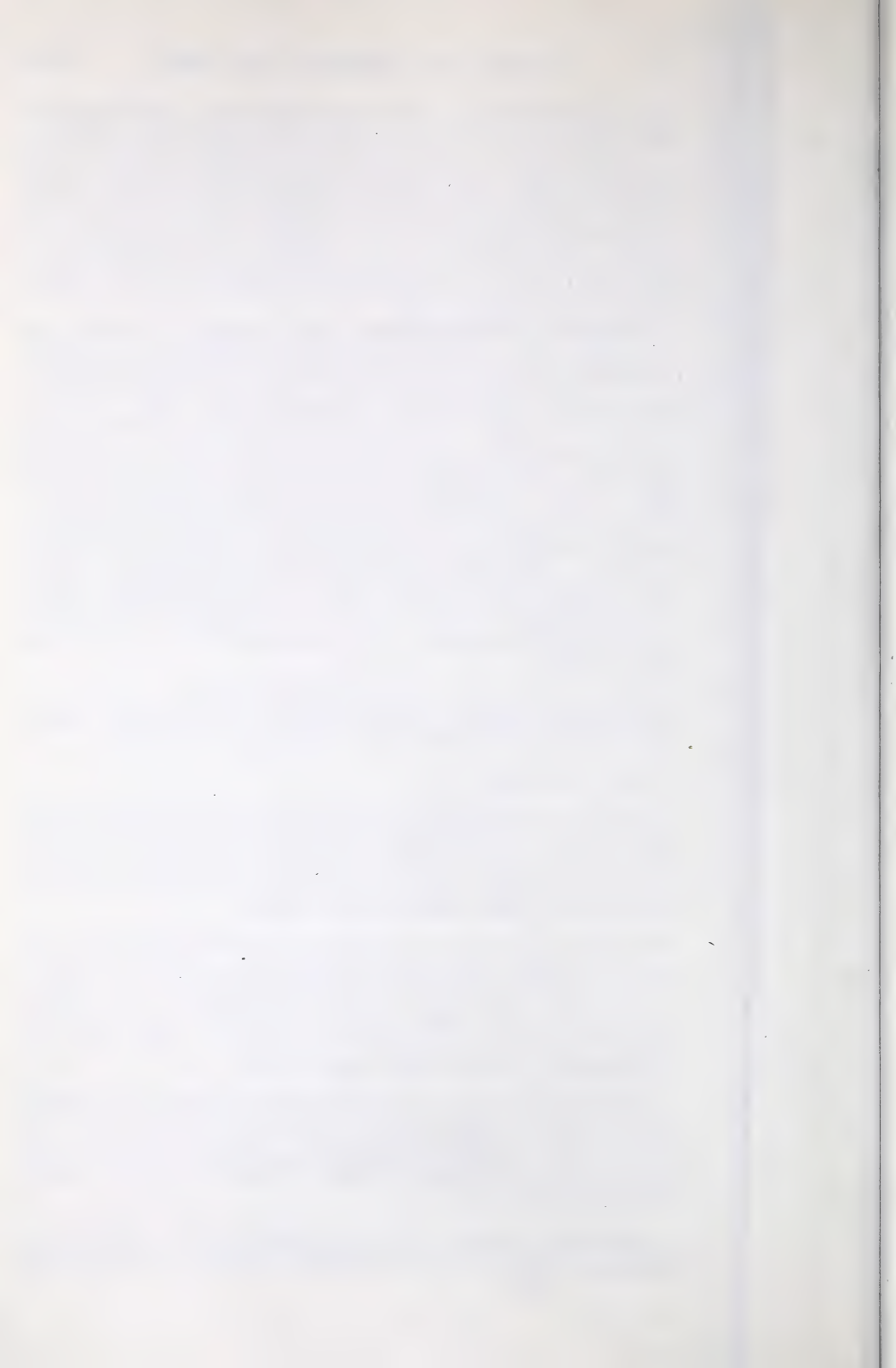
"The vote was put whether they would build a pound [and] passed in the affirmative; then it was proposed to build it at the parting of the Roads by Joseph Holden's, Jr. [now Hobart Raymond's], and put to vote and passed in the affirmative; then voted Philip Bemis Dea. Miller and Joseph Holden Jr. to build the pound, and made choice of Joseph Holden Jr. to Keep the pound [and] voted to build it thirty feet square."

So far as appears in the records these several votes were not carried into effect, and it is reasonable to suppose that the matter was held in abeyance until after incorporation took place. On the 24th of December, 1759, the citizens "voted to have a pound," but made no provision for building it. But on the 25th of September, the next year, 1760, it was

"Voted to build a Pound and to Set it upon the corner of the Meeting-house Plot Next to Dea. Holden's land [now Geo. S. Ham's] and made choise of Benjamin Butterfield, Capt. Daniel Hoar, John Rand For a comite for to build the Pound thirty feet Square and that it Be Left to the Discreation of Said Commity how much they will Give a day for Labour for Building Said Pound."

No money, however, was appropriated for the purpose indicated, and the contemplated work was not done. In the follow-





ing March, 1761, the inhabitants were called upon to reconsider their action and to fix upon a location of the pound, "more handy to water." This they did, deciding finally upon the spot first mentioned, near where Hobert Raymond's barn stands to-day, and there the first pound was soon afterward constructed. This enclosure remained and served its intended purpose about forty years.

On the 10th of October, 1799, a new pound was ordered to be built at the northwest corner of the Common, near the present residence of Mrs. Peter Wright. It was to be of stone, forty feet square. Definite specifications were voted in regard to its construction, and Abner Holden, Esq., Captain Hoar, and Asa Farnsworth were chosen a committee "to let out the building of the Pound at vendue to the lowest bidder." This was accordingly done, the whole being contracted for at \$36.25, which, with the expense attending the sale, \$2.00, made the entire cost \$38.25. It was completed in due time and put in charge of the Selectmen, who appointed Ezra Holden its first keeper.

After the building of the present Mrs. Wright house in 1810, this structure was found to be an annoyance to its occupants, and when Alexander Dustin came into possession of the place, he entered into negotiations with the town which resulted in its removal, at his expense, to a spot owned by him at "the South corner of the Common near the road leading to Timothy Damon's," where it still remains. Little use has there been for it in later years, although a keeper is regularly appointed for it year by year as time goes on.

**Town Stocks.** Among the penal, corrective, and reformatory institutions or appliances of the olden times was a certain complex machine or device bearing this name. They consisted of two or more pieces of timber moving between fixed uprights, with holes or notches in them so adjusted and arranged as to confine the feet and hands and sometimes the head of a subject in a more or less painful position, as a punishment for minor offences against the good order and peace of society. They were set up in some public place, where the unfortunate culprit was subjected to the ridicule and scornful taunts of the passers-by,—this perhaps constituting the chief element of the chastisement received. In some instances they were permanently established—a constant reminder to the wayward and viciously inclined of the fate of the small transgressor; in others they were so constructed as to be easily put together and as easily taken apart again, being set up and exposed to view only when occasion required.

Westminster was not without this interesting and unique device, but not much is to be found in the records relating to it. Dec. 24, 1759, the question of making stocks came before the district and it "passed in [the] Negative." On the following 25th of September it was voted "to build Stocks," but



there is no evidence that this vote was carried into effect. Indeed no other action of the town upon this matter was at any subsequent date recorded in the books of the clerk. But in the volume chronicling the transactions of the Selectmen for the year 1793, it appears that on Jan: 14th an order was drawn for the 'payment of Thomas Knowler "for making the town stocks, 10 shillings," which seems to settle beyond all doubt the question of their actual existence. No names of culprits sentenced to or confined in them have been found.

**Town Posts.** In a warrant for a legal meeting to be held March 2, 1789, was an article

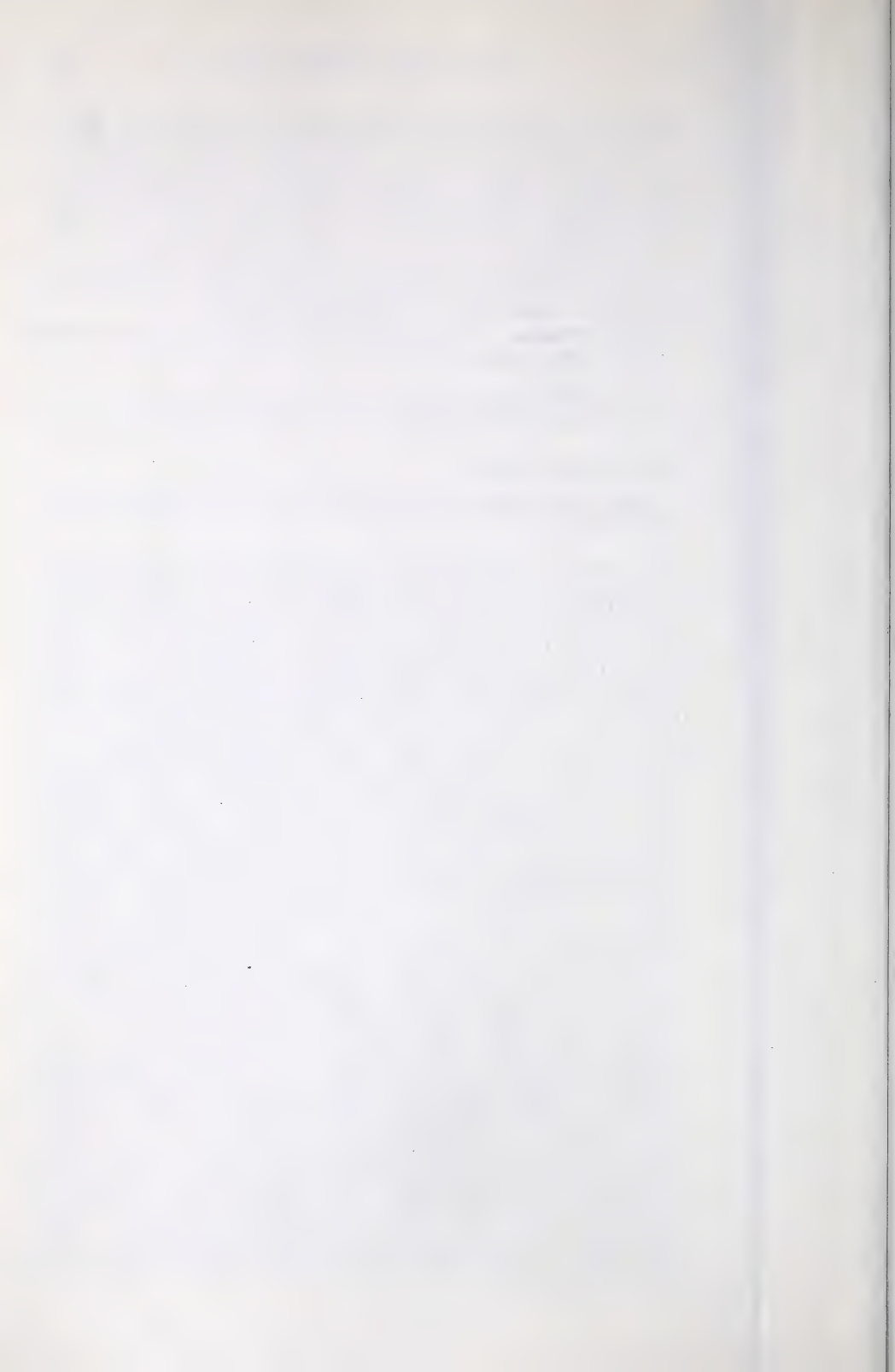
"To see if the town will Erect a post or a Box for town warrants to stand on at the Meeting-house, etc."

Whereupon, it was

"*Voted* to erect a post att the S. E. corner of the Meeting-house to Sett Town Warrants on."

A committee consisting of Captain Bigelow and three others was appointed to fix dimensions, etc. They reported that there should be "a post of stone ten inches squair, two feet and a half in the ground and Six and a half above, with a Box on the Head to contain Notifications—the Box to be 15 inches wide and 20 inches high with a pitched head and a glass door, the glass to be 8 x 10 the post and box to be painted Spanish brown, said post to stand two feet from the S. E. corner of the Meeting-house." The report was accepted and adopted, and the execution of the work was let out to the lowest bidder, Capt. Elisha Bigelow taking it for 11s. 6d. A year later the matter of a second post being before the town in due form, it was voted "to git a Stone post and set it at the S. W. corner of the Meeting-house and that sd post be uniform with the other." This vote was at once carried into effect, Captain Bigelow doing the work as before. These *posts* stood as long as the building did, though the *boxes*, with which they were crowned, appear to have been superseded in the year 1810 by a single one placed upon the house itself, near the front door, by Edward Kendall, who was paid therefor \$1.75.

**Horse Block.** Before the days of wheeled vehicles, when horseback riding was the chief means of journeying from place to place, or about one's own neighborhood, what was known as the horse block, as a help to mounting and dismounting, especially on the part of women, was in common use. It was generally a large stone, or butt of a tree cut off at a suitable length, —though not infrequently a rude bench or series of steps of the proper height was made to serve the end required. Each dwelling was provided with one of these conveniences, as were also taverns, stores, and other places of public resort. At a





very early day one was placed near the meetinghouse, occupying a position at a little distance from its easterly end. It consisted of an immense flat stone, having a superficial area of about seven feet by ten, several inches in thickness, laid upon other stones of sufficient size to bring it to a proper elevation for its intended use. Around it would be arranged, at the close of the Sunday service or other public occasions, as many horses as could stand, which, being mounted by their respective riders, would move off and give place to others awaiting their turn and time, and so on till all desiring such accommodation were provided for. The principal stone in this case was procured by Joseph Miller, Jr., father of the late John Miller, from a pasture formerly owned by Samuel Merriam on the easterly side of Graves' Hill. It now lies in front of one of the doors of the dwelling house of George S. Ham.

**Guide Posts.** Probably none of these desirable helps to travelers existed within the limits of Westminster before the year 1795, when the Legislature passed a law requiring them to be erected wherever town authorities judged they might be needed for the convenience of the public, and affixing a fine of twenty shillings a month for neglecting the observance of the same. At a town meeting held May 6th, it was voted "that the Selectmen provide Guide-boards agreeably to the Law." The action of the board is noted in the clerk's book of records as follows:

"By Virtue of a Law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and By order of the Town of Westminster, We the Subscribers Selectmen of the Town of Westminster for the year 1795, do agree to arrect the Following guide posts at the Crotch of the following Roads

"1 post Stands neer Oliver Whitcomb's [now Albert E. Smith's] with two Bords on s<sup>d</sup> post the inscription on s<sup>d</sup> Bords To Ashburnham to Winchendon 10 miles

"2<sup>d</sup> Stands by Mr. Whitmond's [Scrabble Hollow] two Bords To Worcester 26 miles To Boston 55 miles

"3 below the pound [near Joseph T. Marshall's] two Bords to Ashburnham To Boston

"4 By the pound [near Hobart Raymond's] To Boston 55 miles To Ashburnham 7 miles To Boston 53 miles. To Worcester 23 miles.

"5<sup>th</sup> By Mr. Jones [on the common] Right Hand Road to Winchendon 7 miles Right and Left to Templeton 9 miles

"6 by Mr. Gerrishes [opposite Nichols Bros.' chair factory] To Templeton and Winchendon

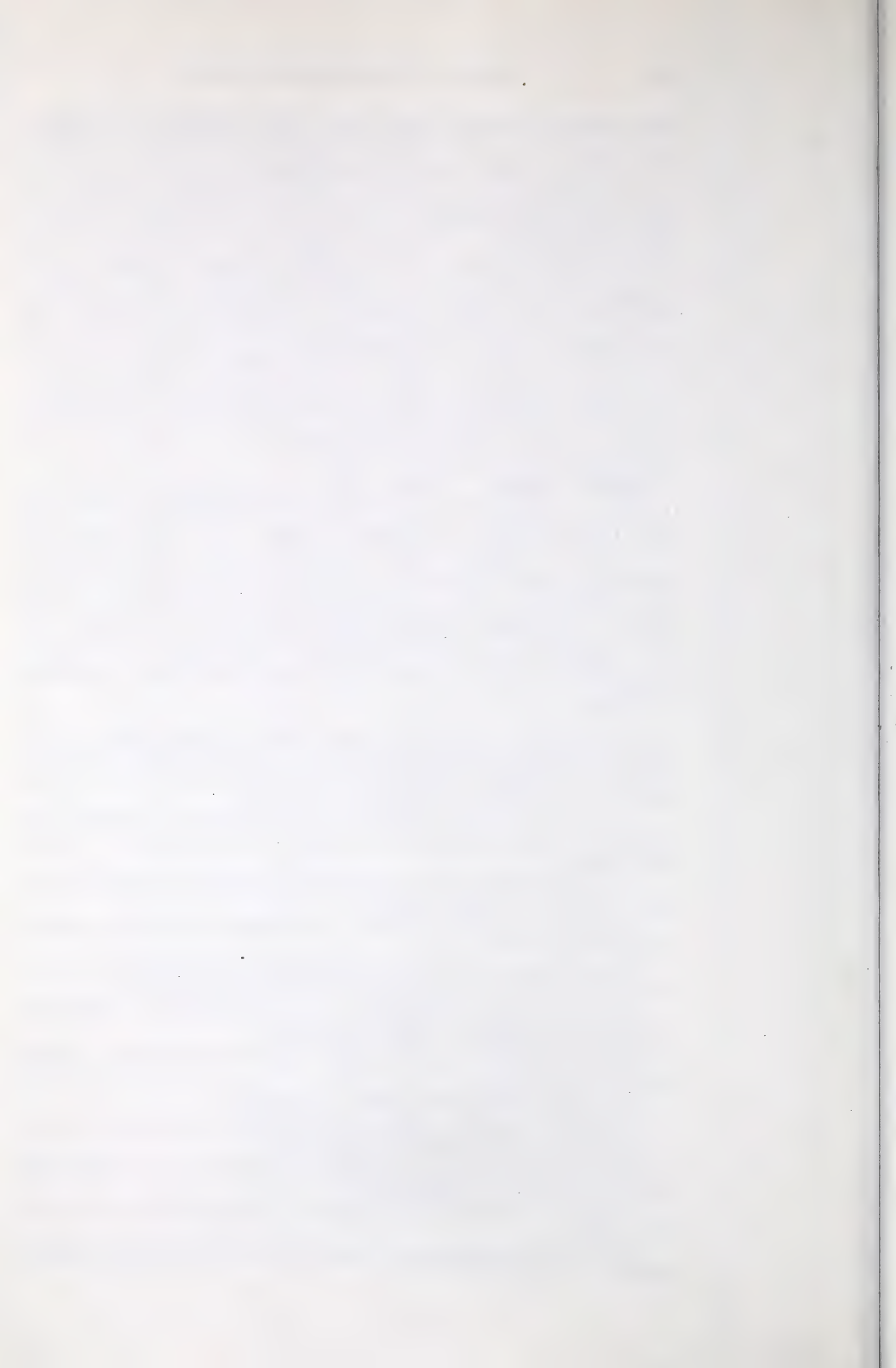
"7 By Capt. Bigelows [now Rufus J. Laver's].

"8 By Mr. John Darby's [late John K. Learned's] To Worcester 22 miles to Rutland 12 miles To Boston and Worcester

"9 the Right hand Road to Rutland the Left hand to Worcester [probably a second board at the Darby corner].

"10 By Mr. Williams [S. E. school-house] to Westminster meeting house three miles

"11 By Capt. Bemis'es [near where George Harris lives] 54 miles to Boston



"The Selectmen have agreed that the Bords be painted and the inscription be put on Hansomly and an index pointing to the Road  
 "in Witness where of we have Set our Hands at Westminster July 1795—

"JOSEPH HOLDEN	} <i>Selectmen."</i>
EBR JONES	
ABEL WOOD	
ZACHARIAH RAND	
JONAS WHITNEY	

The work was done as provided for, the posts being supplied by Abel Wood, Jonas Whitney, Captain Bigelow, and Captain Bemis, and the painting, lettering, etc., by Silas Perry.

As time has gone on other boards have been put up at important points, as occasion seemed to require, either by definite instruction from the town or at the discretion of the Selectmen, much to the convenience and grateful appreciation of travelers.

**The Town Bell.** On the 18th of March, 1793, several years after the second meetinghouse was built, the town "voted and granted one hundred pounds to purchase a Bell with," but, before the close of the meeting, reconsidered and annulled the same. Had the first action of the town been maintained it was proposed to erect at once a belfry, but, as it was reversed, the building of this appendage to the house of worship was deferred till a later date, as stated on page 279. And when it was finally put up in 1807, the bell for it was purchased by private subscription, though no record has been found of the fact. It is a matter of record, however, that the town voted July 4, 1807, to appropriate \$32.50 "for the bell apparatus and for bringing the bell itself from Brookfield and hanging the same." Corresponding thereto, a record of an order drawn by the Selectmen for the payment of this amount to Capt. Stephen Hoar, appears in their book. The bell was in its place October, 1807, and the ringing of it from that date to March, 1808, was let to Capt. Ezra Holden for \$6.00. Subsequently the ringing was associated with the care of the building, as long as the latter remained the property of the town, after which the town provided for that service as a separate interest, year by year, at the annual March meeting.

At the time of the erection of the present meetinghouse of the First Parish, the question of what was to be done with the bell, which involved the rightful ownership of the same, became a matter for public consideration. In the warrant for the annual meeting held March 6, 1837, was an article

"To see if the town will relinquish and give their right (if any they have) to the bell on the old Meeting-house to the subscribers to said Bell, and act anything relative to said Bell or provide a place to hang said bell, etc."

Upon this article it was

"*Voted*, That the Selectmen of the town be directed to take down the bell from the old Meeting-house immediately after the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the present month and offer it to the owners or some one of the owners of the new



Meeting-house last built in the town to be hung on their house for the use of the Town and Parish—the town to have a right to appoint a person (in that way or manner they may think proper) to ring the bell at all times as the town may direct by their agents or otherwise, and the owners of said new house to have the privilege to ring the bell for all Parish purposes as they shall direct until the bell is broken or of no use to ring as a bell. And if the owners of the said new house or any one of them after being notified as before directed refuse or for the space of two weeks neglect to accept of the bell on the conditions before mentioned, then the Selectmen be directed to offer the bell to the First Universalist Society in Westminster on the same conditions . . . And if the Universalist Society refuse or neglect to accept of the bell on these conditions then to offer it to the Baptist Society . . . and if they refuse or neglect to accept it . . . then the Selectmen be directed to provide a place on the ground for the bell to be hung and rung till the town shall further direct.”

The party to whom it was first offered accepted it, and it was accordingly placed in the belfry of the First Parish Meeting-house, where it remained until it was superseded by a new one in 1857.

This first bell was broken at least three different times: first in 1815, when it was repaired by Samuel Mosman, Jr.; and second in 1825. By whom it was then repaired is not known, although Samuel Puffer was paid for getting the work done. In 1857 it was so badly damaged as to require a new bell to take its place. On the 14th of October Edward Kendall, Josiah Puffer, and Joel Merriam, Jr. were appointed a committee to purchase a new bell weighing 200 or 300 pounds more than the old one; also to see if the old subscribers would relinquish their interest in the broken bell. No report of that committee is noted in the records of the town clerk. It is understood, however, that no representatives of the proprietors of the old bell could be found, and hence the new bell, purchased by order of the town, became the exclusive property of the town, as it continues to be to this day.

The old custom of having the bell rung at 12 o'clock M. and at 9 o'clock in the evening on week days, and tolled whenever a death occurred, was maintained till a clock was placed in the tower of the new Baptist church in the village, when the former practice was discontinued by vote of the town April 7, 1873.

**Powder House.** At the March meeting in 1817, one item of business specified in the warrant calling the same was “to see if the Town will erect a building for the purpose of keeping the Town Stock of Ammunition, etc.” Whereupon it was voted to put up such a structure, and Dea. James White, Joseph Brown, and Alexander Dustin, Esq. were appointed a committee to carry the vote into effect. This action was, however, subsequently annulled, but in 1820 the matter came before the town again, when a similar vote was passed and Alexander Dustin, Esq., Dea. James White, and Luke Bigelow were made a committee to consider and report upon the size, material, cost, etc., of such a house as in their judgment was needed.





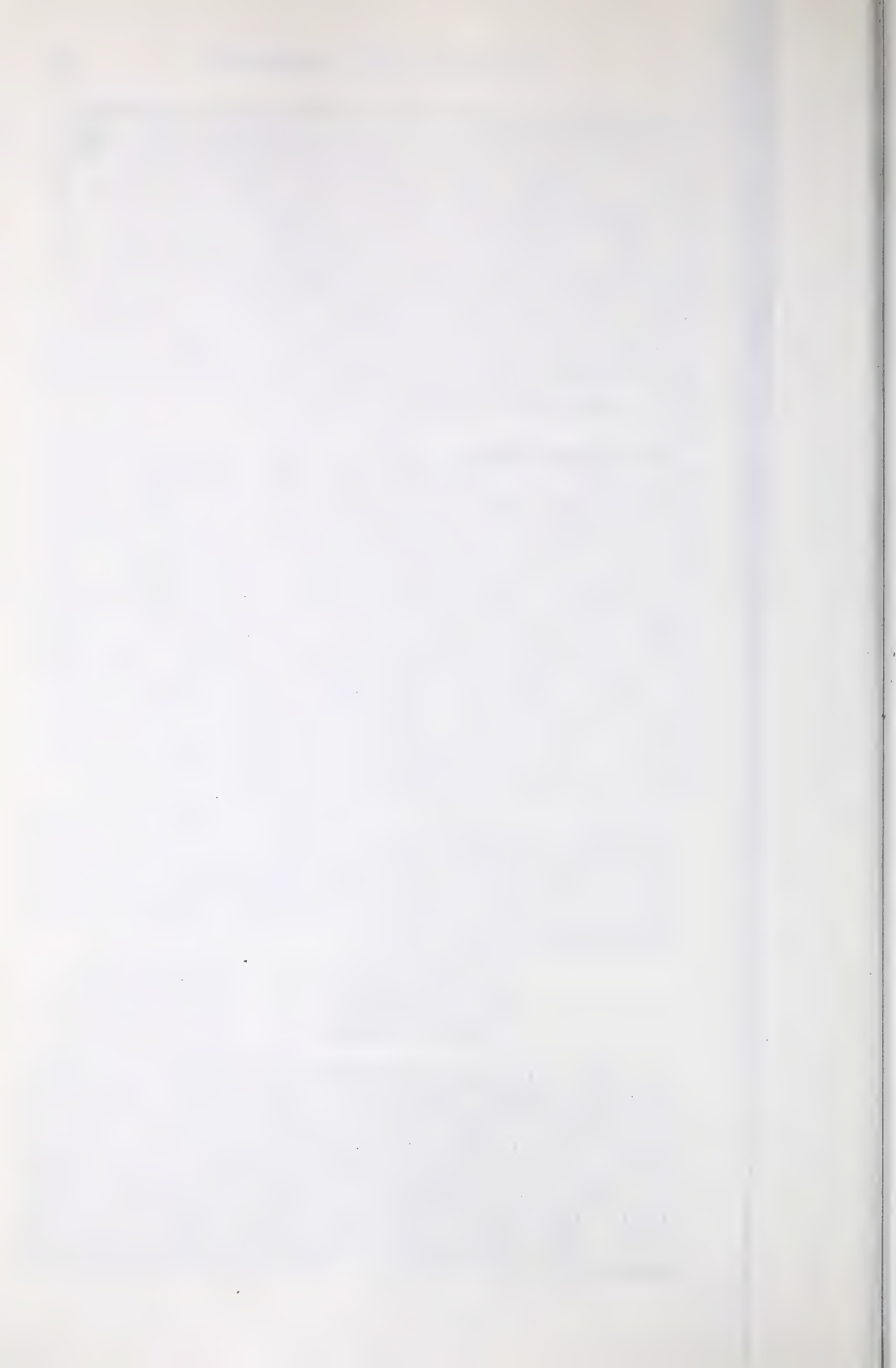
They reported in favor of one "six feet square, to be built of brick, with walls one foot thick, five feet eight inches high, a square roof of plank well shingled, with suitable shelves in the same—a suitable door with lock and key well hung, all thoroughly finished and the wood work painted at a cost of not less than 25 nor more than 30 dollars." The report was accepted, and Capt. Nathan Whitney, Dea. James White, and Edward Kendall were chosen a committee to have charge of the work. They let it to Farwell Cowee, who erected the structure for \$26.50, the committee locating it, at their own discretion, on a large rock in the rear of the present dwelling of George Hager, where it stood for many years as the symbol of a civil-military type of New England life now for the most part passed away.

**Fire Department.** So far as can be learned from the town records and otherwise, no provision was made for extinguishing fires, save by the primitive means of voluntary, improvised action on the part of individuals, using the simplest and most easily procured facilities therefor, until the year 1825, when the first fire engine was brought into the place. This engine appears to have been purchased by a number of citizens living in or near the village, who started a movement in that behalf independently of any action on the part of the citizens at large, and secured most of the money needed for the object in view by voluntary subscription. These parties failed to obtain funds sufficient to pay for the machine, and the town, Nov. 26, 1826, voted \$35.00, if wanted, to make up the deficiency. The following document, which explains itself, contains the names of those particularly active in this matter.

"Westminster Apr. 11, 1825. To the Gentlemen Selectmen of the town of Westminster.—We, the subscribers, inhabitants of said town, who with many others have procured a Fire Engine for the use of said town, and as there is no select company to take care and manage the same in case of fire, request you gentlemen to take from the Militia Companies in this town such persons as your wisdom may dictate to take charge of said Fire Engine and manage the same whenever necessary.

"ALEX <sup>r</sup> DUSTIN,	OLIVER ESTEY,
JONATHAN MINOTT,	JOSEPH MINOTT,
JOHN WHITE,	ASA C. EVERETT,
LEONARD MINOTT,	LUKE MINOTT,
NATHAN WHITNEY, JR.,	THOMAS GAUT."

Pursuant to this petition, the Selectmen appointed the following named persons members of the first engine company of Westminster, to wit: Jonathan Minott, Thomas Gaut, John Damon, Jonas Cutting, Luke Minott, John Dunn, Isaac B. Woodward, Nathan H. Cutting, William Sawin, Nathan Whitney, Emory Bates, Oliver Estey, Edward Kendall, Jr., Leonard Minott, Hiram Everett, Ebenezer Jones, Joseph Minott, Philip Crosby, Asa Cutting, Robert Peckham, Ira Hoar. It is to be presumed that these persons, or others appointed from year to



year in the same way, served the public need at the outset without remuneration, as did the people generally in case of a conflagration.

After a time, however, provision was made by the State Legislature for the payment of regularly enrolled members of engine companies. A law was passed March 1, 1834, requiring every such company to be composed of thirty men, each man to be paid a sum equal to his poll tax, subject to the action of the towns of the Commonwealth respectively. On the 2d of March, 1835, Westminster "voted to accept and approve the act respecting Engine Men," and they thereafter received payment for their services.

The first engine was a cheap affair and satisfied the public but a few years. Hence, in March, 1839, Simeon Sanderson, Joseph Whitman, Esq., John Heywood, Capt. Jesse Spalding, Col. Asa Bigelow, and Capt. Joseph H. Whitney were chosen a committee to purchase a new engine, the expense thereof to the town not to exceed \$300.00—the presumption being that private subscriptions would considerably increase the total amount. Whether this was so or not does not appear. But at an adjourned meeting an additional sum of \$150.00 was devoted to the same object. The engine was purchased and the aggregate amount, \$450.00, paid for it as per order of the Selectmen, drawn June 5, 1839.

On the 14th of November, 1842, the town voted "to let the Forbush village, so called, have the use of the old engine and old engine house on condition they raise a company to manage the engine and move the house free of expense to the town." At the annual meeting in 1844 the town

*"Voted, to abate the poll tax of the Engine-men for the year ensuing.*

*"Then on motion voted to purchase a sled for the use of the engine men."*

The poll tax of enginemen was usually abated year by year till 1870, when the sum of five dollars was voted them and this sum has been generally granted to the present day.

On the 12th of November, 1849, it was

*"Voted, That the Town do purchase a good fire Suction Engine for the use of the town to be kept in the Narrows, so called, so long as the people in the Narrows will man it and keep said Engine in good repair free from expense to the Town."*

At a later date this engine was transferred to South Westminster, a fire company having been formed there for the purpose of properly caring for and working it when occasion required.

In 1855 a new suction engine was purchased for the central village, and some years subsequently the building formerly used as a shoe shop by Aaron Smith and others, located near the Universalist Church, was secured for the proper housing of the





same. On the 7th of November, 1882, the town voted to make certain changes in this building to accommodate an independent amateur company recently formed, which had purchased a machine with funds obtained by private subscription.

The present equipment of the fire department consists of two Hunneman engines well preserved and in good condition, with an amount of hose suitable for ordinary fires, and other needful appliances. These are appropriately located, as indicated, at the Center and at South Westminster, where they are properly housed and cared for, and held in readiness for use whenever a call for them is given. At the former locality there is a company of forty men, of which A. J. Bolton is *foreman*, and at the latter, one of thirty men under the direction of Alfred Barnes. Both of these companies are supposed to be under good discipline and capable of efficient service. The amateur company, which has a Button engine, is resting on laurels won, if at all, in days now past and gone. The central engine house has a fine hall in its second story for the convenience and comfort of the men having it and its contents in charge.

**Town House.** From the time of the incorporation of the district of Westminster in 1759 to the year 1820 the meeting-house, which was the property of the municipality, was used, for the most part, not only for religious services, but for holding meetings for the transaction of the secular and civil business of the township. And after that structure passed into the possession of the First Congregational Society the same practice, probably by some condition connected with the transfer of the property, continued, without special expense to the public. But when, in 1836, the parish decided to abandon its time-honored sanctuary on the old Common, and locate in the more central part of the village, which involved an early destruction or removal of the building, it became necessary for the town to provide other accommodations for the management of its corporate affairs in future years. A meeting of the voting citizens was therefore called on the 5th of December

“To see if the Town will take any measures to purchase the old Meeting-house of the First Parish for a Town House etc.

“To see if the town will take any measures to build a Town House for the use of the Town etc.”

The first article was passed over, and on the second a committee, consisting of Wonder Wears, Esq., Capt. Joseph Whitney, Leonard Minott, Edward Kendall, and Capt. Jesse Spalding, was chosen “to ascertain the necessity of building a Town-house or provide a place for holding Town meetings in future,” and report at the next March meeting. The committee reported as directed, but the nature of their report is not recorded. Nothing definite came of this action in the line indicated, the



town deciding to hire the old meetinghouse for its use for an indefinite period. At length, on the 4th of March, 1839, a committee of twelve persons, with Dr. John White as chairman, was appointed "to make a plan and estimate the expense of building a Town House and report." They did so, and on the 15th of April submitted the following :

"The committee are unanimously of the opinion that the Town should build a house for municipal purposes and have prepared a plan and estimated the cost of a building suitable for those purposes as follows: your Committee believe that the whole expense of furnishing a spot and erecting a building one story high and finishing a town hall agreeably to the accompanying plan may be procured at the expense of \$1300.00. With regard to a site on which to locate—your Committee have viewed three places—one between Mr. Joseph N. Minott's and Mr. Jonas Cutting's, which we understand can be purchased for \$235.00; Mr. Cutting's land consists of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  rods in front and 8 rods in the rear.

JOHN WHITE, Chairman."

The town "voted to accept the report of the Committee and to build a Town-house the present season on the land of Mr. Cutting." Capt. Joseph Whitney, Leonard Minott, Simeon Sanderson, Esq., Dr. John White, and Joseph Whitman, Esq., were chosen a committee to carry the several votes into effect. An appropriation of enough of the internal revenue coming to the town was made to cover the incurred expense. An attempt was afterwards made to change the location of the house to "the spot where the Gaut blacksmith shop stands [near the present site of Mr. Bruce's store] or any other suitable spot," but without avail. The building was completed agreeably to the vote of the town, on the first of the following November, at least so far as to be occupied for the State election on the 11th of that month, though some of the details were not finished for quite a while afterward.

The house as originally constructed had two front entrances opening into two passageways or entries with a small Selectmen's room between them. The main hall was supplied with permanent seats facing the entrances, between which was a narrow platform and a desk, for the presiding officers or speakers. The floor had a gradual rise from front to rear. The building remained in this condition, the lower portion only being utilized, for two years, when by vote of the town, Nov. 14, 1842, the upper hall was finished and made ready for use, entrance there-to being gained by a stairway from the entry at the south-westerly corner of the structure.

An ineffectual attempt at some desirable modification of the internal arrangement of the lower hall was made in 1850. But at a meeting held April 2, 1855, upon an article in the warrant, "To see if the town will alter and repair the Town Hall, etc.," it was voted "to refer the subject matter of this Article to the Selectmen, and instruct them to drop the floor of the Town Hall, remove the Desk to the other end of it, obtain







W. P. ALLEN, GARDNER, MASS.

TOWN HALL BUILDING.





seats, and paint and shingle the house." This was done, and the building as thus improved was used, with but few modifications or changes, for nearly thirty years.

But the time at length came when the growing needs of the town, especially with reference to the public library, which had been established and had increased to such proportions as to require better accommodations than it had thus far enjoyed, demanded important improvements in the chief public building of the place. On the 4th of November, 1884, a committee was chosen in regular town meeting to take into consideration the matter of remodeling the Town House, and report thereon. The committee, of which Augustine Whitney was chairman, presented the result of their deliberations March 2, 1885, recommending the raising of the building and putting a new story underneath, with library room, kitchen, pantry, small hall, etc., at an estimated cost of \$2,800.00. The report was accepted and adopted, and the same committee, consisting of Augustine Whitney, S. D. Simonds, Charles Nichols, Theodore S. Wood, and E. L. Burnham, was chosen to have charge of the proposed work, and carry it forward to completion. Their commission was executed during the summer following, to the general acceptance and satisfaction of their constituency, giving to the public a building conveniently arranged within for the various uses for which it was designed, and presenting externally, in a simple style of architecture, a very respectable and commanding appearance. In its present improved condition it will serve all reasonable and probable needs and exigencies for many years to come, and is an ornament and an honor to the village and town.

A somewhat generous and comprehensive policy in regard to opening the Town Hall building for other than strictly town uses has prevailed from almost the beginning. The matter was at the outset put into the hands of the Selectmen, who were inclined to a more restrictive course than was deemed advisable by the general public, the result being that it became a frequent subject for the voters' consideration. At the annual meeting in March, 1842, it was voted "to have the Town House opened for all meetings of a Moral, Scientific, and Literary nature, when any of the citizens of Westminster may request the same," and the Selectmen were instructed to furnish suitable means of lighting the main hall for evening gatherings. In their construction of the above vote, the Selectmen felt themselves bound to refuse the hall to the Second Adventists at the time of the great "Miller excitement" of 1843. Whereupon certain interested parties endeavored to get a vote of censure passed against these officers, but the town refused to gratify them. At a later meeting it was voted "that William Wiswall have the privilege of occupying the Town House for meetings not notoriously immoral, or any other inhabitant of the town by mak-



ing application of the agent who has charge of the house." April 7, 1845, "Voted to give the citizens liberty to hold Singing Schools and Caucusses in the Town Hall by their finding their own lights and fuel." Dec. 1, 1845, "Voted to grant the use of the Town Hall to the Lyceum for its meetings this fall and ensuing winter without charge therefor." The same vote was passed many times afterward. April 7, 1856, voted "to charge \$3.00 for the use of the Town Hall, including lights and warming when necessary, to all who do not belong to town." Oct. 4, 1884, voted "\$80.00 towards the purchase of a piano for the Town Hall," a sufficient sum additional having been raised by private subscription to secure an instrument satisfactory to those interested and concerned.

**Town Safes.** Upon an article in the warrant calling the annual meeting in 1852, "to see if the town will provide for the safe keeping of the public records," it was voted to authorize the Selectmen to purchase a safe for the purpose indicated, and one was bought accordingly. This served the end proposed for more than twenty years, or until an increased amount of important books, papers, etc., rendered larger accommodations of this sort desirable; when, in the year 1874, a second one was obtained by the same authority. These two, still extant, with a smaller one purchased ten years later for the special use of the clerk, are likely to supply all public needs in this behalf for many years to come.

**Post Offices.** The postal system of this country, though projected in 1692, was not organized and put into operation by the parent government till 1710, the chief depository for receiving and distributing letters being located at New York, with subordinate ones at several other important places in the colonies, — Boston being one of them. The name of the first postmaster-general has not been ascertained, but Benjamin Franklin was appointed in 1753, and continued in office till he became involved in the troubles which precipitated the American Revolution, when he was summarily discharged.

Soon after the establishment of the United States government in 1789, this department of the public service was reconstructed and set in motion under the direction of S. Osgood of Massachusetts, Postmaster-general. In 1790 there were 75 post offices in the country; in 1800, 903. Postage for 40 miles and under, 8 cents; between 40 and 90 miles, 10 cents; between 90 and 150 miles, 12½ cents; between 150 and 300 miles, 17 cents; between 300 and 500 miles, 20 cents; over 500 miles, 25 cents.

For many years subsequent to the settlement of this town there was no post office nearer than Boston, and whatever business was done through the mail, which was very little indeed, had to be done there. On the 8th of June, 1773, a letter was advertised in the *Massachusetts Spy*, then published in that town, for "Solomon Whitney, Westminster."







W. P. ALLEN, GARDNER, MASS.

RESIDENCE OF DANIEL C. MILES.



In 1775 an office was started at Worcester under the auspices of the Provincial Congress, with Isaiah Thomas, Postmaster. This was afterwards adopted by the United States government, and for more than twenty-five years the postal business of Westminister was transacted at that point. Aug. 14, 1776, a postrider, name not given, advertised in the *Spy*, previously transferred to Worcester, to set out thence "for Fitchburg, arriving every Wednesday night. Towns in vicinity accommodated. Letters carried with safety and dispatch." In the same paper lists of letters awaiting delivery from time to time appeared, among which were the following Westminister names at the respective dates designated: Sept. 24, 1789, Nathan Whitney; Nov. 11, 1790, Mrs. Sarah Sever; Jan. 21, 1795, Ebenezer Jones; April 10, 1799, Oliver Jackson; April 16, 1800, Asa Miles.

Such were the postal facilities here up to the time of the establishment of a local office in 1804. The first Postmaster in town was Daniel Bartlett, appointed May 10, 1804. He continued in office till his death, on Christmas day, 1819. His successors, with the date of their commissions, were Timothy Doty, Jan. 22, 1820; Asa Farnsworth, March 31, 1835; Joseph Whitman, May 1, 1837; Joseph M. Whitman, June 21, 1860; Samuel G. Kendall, March 26, 1861; Wallace Cheney, March 2, 1875; Jerome Whitman, Sept. 2, 1885; Edward S. Kendall, the present incumbent, June 1, 1889.

Four subordinate offices have existed in town during its later history, as indicated below:

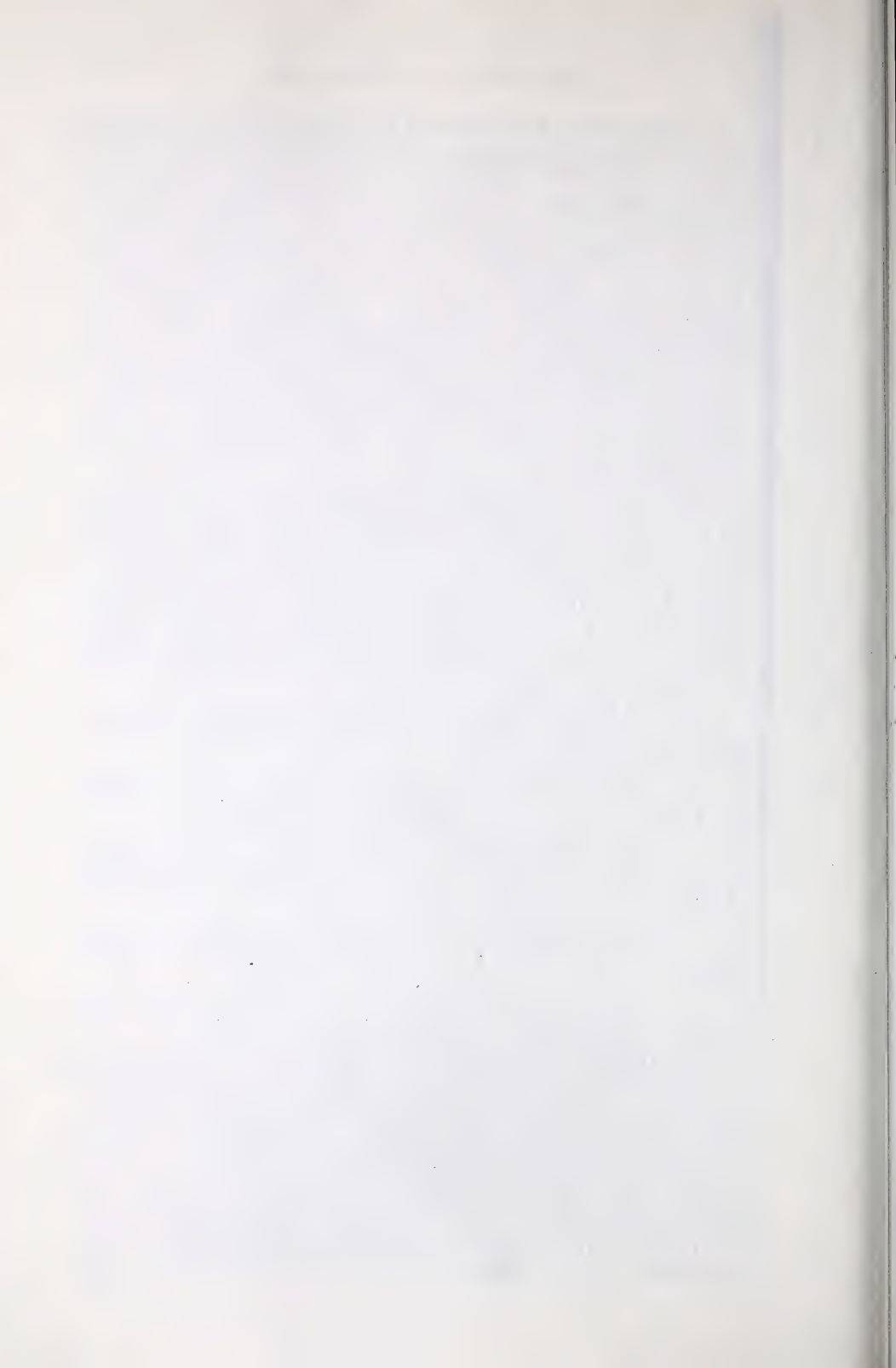
1. "Wachusett Village," established Dec. 15, 1851. Postmaster, Benjamin Wyman, appointed Dec. 15, 1851; Charles A. Lucas, Dec. 14, 1874. Discontinued Dec. 26, 1877.

2. "Westminister Depot," established Jan. 29, 1869. Postmaster, George K. Walcott, appointed Jan. 29, 1869; Walter E. Lord, Nov. 10, 1881; Levi Warner, March 11, 1886; Melville H. Warner, acting Postmaster, 1891.

3. "South Westminister," established June 22, 1874. Postmaster, Artemas Merriam, appointed the same date. Still in office.

4. "Wachusett," established Oct. 5, 1880, with Ann M. Sprague, Postmistress. Discontinued Oct. 12, 1887.

**Westminister Bank.** This institution was chartered in the year 1875, chiefly through the influence and active efforts of Daniel C. Miles, who, in connection with the various industrial enterprises which have engaged his thought and energy through life, has given much attention for a few years past to the study of questions of finance and collateral subjects. By personal solicitation he enlisted the interest and co-operation of capitalists and others in the undertaking, and thereby secured contributions to its capital,—a hundred thousand dollars. Mr. Miles was chosen President of the corporation at the outset,





and has been annually re-elected to the position since. Wm. Mayo was the first cashier, serving till 1887, when he resigned, and was succeeded by the present incumbent, Frank W. Fenno. The officers of the institution at this writing (1892) are Daniel C. Miles, *President*; Charles Nichols, *Vice-President*; Frank W. Fenno, *Cashier*; David W. Hill, Charles Upton, E. L. Burnham, S. H. Sprague, Preston P. Ellis, Charles A. Forbush, Lyman Allen, F. J. Pierce, Gardner; George Jones, Lunenburg; I. N. Bartlett, Royalston; Fred N. Cheney, Boston, *Directors*.

#### CEMETERIES.

It was undoubtedly the purpose of the original proprietors of the township called Narragansett No. 2, to have the resting place of the dead located in close proximity to the meeting-house, as was the general custom with new settlements in the early days of New England. This purpose was embodied in the plan for the first division of lands, the committee to whom that work was assigned being instructed to fix upon a site for a meetinghouse and then "lay out a sufficiency of land for said Meeting-house a Training Field and a Burying-place, not exceeding Ten acres." For reasons not stated, but probably on account of the unsuitableness of the location for such uses, no part of this land was ever devoted to burial purposes, and no action seems to have been taken in regard to the matter for several years after a settlement was made. So far as is known, no deaths occurred during that period.

In the advertisement calling a meeting of the proprietors Sept. 1, 1742, was an article "to know what the proprietors will Do in Fixing a Place for a Burying-place in Said Township." Upon this article it was "Voted and accepted of the acre of the Land Given by Mr. Dunster for a burying place," and a committee was chosen to lay it out and take a deed of the same. No record can be found showing where this land was or whether it was actually conveyed to the "Propriety" as proposed. On the contrary, circumstances seem to indicate that the vote of the town was never carried into effect. Mr. Dunster then owned, and was probably living upon, lot No. 10, lying southwest of the meetinghouse site and quite separate from it, and there is no evidence to prove that any burials ever took place on the territory then in his possession.

Moreover, eleven years afterward, July 25, 1753, the proprietors "Voted and chose Lt. Stearns Mr. graves and Andrew Darby a Committee to take a deed of Joseph Holden Junior of ye burying place." Joseph Holden, Jr., was then owner of lot No. 19, on which the original part of the old town cemetery was located, and the record undoubtedly relates to the legal transfer of that to the proprietors of the township for the special uses designated. Some years later the grounds were





substantially fenced, pursuant to a vote passed March 18, 1765. The first person interred therein was a son of Fairbanks Moor, who died in 1742 as elsewhere narrated, Mr. Moor being then in possession of the property. It is not unlikely that others were buried there previous to the time when Mr. Holden conveyed it to the Propriety.

This particular lot of land was used as the sole burial place of the town until 1795, and within its borders was deposited what was mortal of the fathers and mothers of Westminster and of their descendants of the first and second generations. Having become pretty fully occupied, measures were taken in the year named to obtain additional lands, and on the 28th of September a committee, who had been given charge of the matter, reported that they had bargained for an adjoining lot with Michael Gill, at an expense of £33, the same being a part of original house lot No. 20. This second purchase constituted the central portion of the present cemetery and supplied the needs of the town and community for about fifty years. At length, on the 29th of August, 1846, the necessity of increased burial accommodations being apparent, Dea. Benj. F. Wood, Maj. Edward Bacon, and Horace Whitney were chosen a committee to clear up the old grounds and to examine adjoining lands with the view of purchasing them, if deemed advisable. Sept. 20, 1847, they reported certain work done by them, and recommended buying a few acres adjoining the existing grounds on the east, which were owned by Martha Hager and Sarah (Hager) Upton, daughters of the late Elijah Hager. The report was accepted, and they were instructed to effect the contemplated purchase, and to lay out the new grounds into lots, drive-ways, avenues, walks, etc., which was accordingly done.

The three purchases named cover the entire territory of the cemetery under notice, excepting the northwest corner, which was not included in the original one made of Joseph Holden, lying as it then did on the opposite side of the old road to Lunenburg; but which, after the building of the turnpike and the discontinuance of the Lunenburg road, was bought of Edmund Bemis. At the time of the second purchase a house and other buildings were standing on the premises, but they were soon afterwards sold and removed. The tomb at the southwest corner of the grounds was constructed by Dea. Joseph Miller, and no doubt encloses his remains and those of his immediate family.

Little was done by the town in the way of caring for the cemetery grounds previous to the year 1867, when they were put in charge of a committee, as they have been year by year since to the present day. In general, they are in fairly good condition, while many of the private lots are well kept by those specially interested in them. A goodly number of elaborate and costly monuments, chaste and elegant in design, and varied



to suit the taste of those erecting them, gives dignity, grandeur, and attractiveness to this ever-increasing city of the dead.

The first hearse was ordered March 12, 1792, when the town voted "to provide a carriage to attend funerals" and chose Ebenezer Jones, Colonel Dike, and Asa Farnsworth a committee to purchase the same. It would seem that the vote was not carried into immediate effect, inasmuch as the selectmen did not draw an order for paying the expense incurred, \$33.34, till 1795. An appropriate harness for the same was made by William Whiting and Peletiah Everett for \$9.11. A new hearse was built in 1826 by Luke Minott at a cost of \$51.50. In 1840 another was purchased of George W. Lane, manufacturer, in order to have one for the North cemetery, the selectmen to decide which should be assigned to that locality. Twenty-five years later a fourth was procured by vote of the town, and the present one in 1890, the change in the form of burial caskets necessitating a carriage of more ample proportions than were previously required.

A house for the hearse was voted Dec. 22, 1795, to "be Set at the Pound if room, if not to Sett it on the common by the meeting house." It was built fifteen feet long, ten wide, with seven feet posts, by Abner Whitney, at a cost of \$24.00, its site being the one last named. In January, 1803, it was voted "to move it down the hill to the burying ground," which was accordingly done. It stood, as many remember, near the north-west corner and served its purpose till 1856, when the present one near the tomb was ordered by the town and located where the selectmen "saw fit."

**North Burying Ground.** In the warrant for a town meeting held Nov. 6, 1826, was an article "To see if the town will purchase land in the north section of the town for a burying-ground, etc." The subject was referred to a committee who reported favorably at the following March meeting. As a result, about two acres of land were purchased of James Puffer, which, in due time, were properly fenced, laid out, and equipped with appurtenances and appliances suited to the uses for which it was designed. It is a pleasantly located lot, every way appropriate as a resting-place for the bodies of the departed, is neatly kept and adorned with suitable tomb-stones and other memorials of those "not lost but gone before" of that neighborhood. As already indicated, there is a hearse connected with this burial-ground, also a house for the shelter and preservation of the same.

**Mt. Pleasant Cemetery.** On the 27th of October, 1852, an application was made to William S. Bradbury, justice of the peace, for a meeting of persons interested to consider and decide upon the matter of organizing a cemetery association under an act of the Legislature passed in 1841. It was signed by Milton Joslin, William Mayo, Charles Coolidge, Stillman





Brooks, Joseph W. Forbush, William Eaton, Marshall White, J. Russell Coolidge, George Kendall, Joseph Whitman, and George Adams. The meeting was held Nov. 4th, at which the "Westminster Mt. Pleasant Cemetery Co." was organized, with John Minott, *President*; Joseph M. Whitman, *Secretary*; and George Adams, *Treasurer*. A constitution of fourteen articles was adopted for the government of the body, and steps were at once taken by the passage of votes and the appointment of committees for carrying into effect the purposes of those interested in the movement. Thirty-seven persons constituted the original membership.

Two weeks later, Nov. 18th, land was bought of George Adams, lying near the summit of the hill, half a mile southwest of the village, which in due time was properly surveyed and laid out into family burial lots, about 150 in number, a goodly proportion of which have been sold and utilized. In 1887 a small addition was made to the grounds on the southwesterly end, by a gift from Preston P. Ellis, whereby desirable conveniences were secured. In 1890 a fine piece of curbing at the northeasterly extremity was put in by Mr. and Mrs. William Mayo, adding much to the attractiveness of that portion of the territory. The site is an eligible and commanding one, the lots are neatly kept, and numerous monumental tokens of respect, veneration, and love for the departed, of various design, greet alike the first rays of the rising sun and the eye of the observer. The present officers of the association are William Mayo, *President*; C. F. Giles, *Clerk*; Henry Partridge, Frank Eaton, Charles Nichols, *Prudential Committee*.

**Special Organizations.** That man is a social being, endowed by his Creator with faculties and powers that not only fit him for sympathy, fellowship, and co-operation with his kind, but impel him to seek such reciprocity of feeling and action, is one of the most obvious facts, as it is one of the most fundamental truths of human existence. It finds illustration beneath all skies, in every department of life, among all classes of people. Evidences are abundant on all hands and conclusive, that "it is not good for man to be alone."

In this town, as elsewhere, especially in later days, have the capacity for and tendency to associative action been clearly manifest. Almost every human interest, not strictly personal and private, has been represented here in some organized form—in some society, company, or corporation. Many of these have already received attention under appropriate headings and in connection with topics to which they were closely related. A few remain, however, worthy of consideration, and to the proper notice of these a brief space will now be devoted.

**Farmers' and Mechanics' Club.** Some forty years ago, or about 1850, a few of the more intelligent and enterprising farmers of the community, desirous of helping each other



in the various departments of their chosen calling, and of availing themselves of every possible opportunity to gain useful information upon the general study of agriculture as related to practical results, united in the formation of an association designed to facilitate and secure these important ends. This association they denominated "The Farmers' Club." Regular meetings of the members were established for mutual consultation upon matters pertaining to their distinctive craft, the discussion of important questions of productive husbandry, the reading of papers or essays, original and selected, relating to successful tillage, and for other exercises and activities promotive of the objects sought to be attained. Not scornful of what some deride as "book-farming," they founded an agricultural library, which, in a few years, grew to the size of some hundreds of volumes, representing the best thought of the best writers upon scientific agriculture, as it did the most approved means and methods of cultivating the soil and securing abundant harvests,—means and methods tested and recommended by practical farmers and carefully trained experts.

For a series of years the "Club" flourished and wrought a good work for its members and for the general public, its influence extending far and wide beyond its own boundaries and indirectly benefiting the entire farming population of the town. Interest in it subsiding, producing corresponding inactivity and neglect of proffered advantages, its operations after a time ceased altogether. At the expiration of a few years more, however, it was determined to start a new enterprise in the same general behalf, enlarging the original field of activity to such an extent and in such a way that the mechanical as well as agricultural interests of the town should be included and enhanced. To this end an organization was effected some fifteen years ago under the name of "The Farmers' and Mechanics' Club," which at once entered upon a career of general prosperity that has continued unto this day. With occasional meetings for consultation and mutual improvement, for devising plans promotive of the important ends to be subserved and methods for carrying those plans into effect, the chief interest of the members of the organization during the year, at present, centers in the "Annual Fair," held in the early autumn time, as through that agency their chief power for good is exerted, reflexively upon themselves and objectively upon the public at large. As now organized, equipped, and administered, this club is recognized, at home and abroad, as a most efficient and successful institution, salutary and helpful in its influence, industrially, socially, and morally considered, upon all classes of the town's population. Its exhibits from year to year are of superior excellence, reflecting much credit upon those represented in them and adding not a little to the good name of the town in neighboring localities and wherever its attainments in this regard are known.





The present president of the club is Israel Dickinson, and its secretary, Edward C. Damon.

**Co-operative Union.** An association bearing this title was formed about the middle of the present century, for the purpose of securing some measure of relief from the burdens and disabilities incident to the established commercial methods of society, so far as they related to the so-called necessities of life—the common staple articles of personal and domestic consumption.

It was the local expression or outcome of a widely prevailing movement of a period noted for its humanitarian spirit, which extended throughout New England and beyond, and which had its outposts or subordinate agencies in many, if not in all, the towns of the Commonwealth. The underlying idea of that movement was to bring “producer” and “consumer” into immediate contact with each other, and thus remove the necessity of what were termed “middle men,” whose income, whether wages or profits, served not only to increase the cost of goods to the latter but to diminish the selling price to the former. The new form of transfer was therefore designed to accrue to the benefit of both classes most intimately concerned in the matter.

For some years the enterprise prospered. Arrangements were made by which the local branch of the larger organization had come into possession of and stocked the store previously occupied by H. G. Whitney, now represented by George W. Bruce, and considerable business was done in West India goods, groceries, flour, and grain, accruing to more or less of profit to the members and to the outside public. The undertaking was finally given up, for reasons best known to those more immediately concerned in its administration.

**Sovereigns of Industry.** This was a society similar to the last, being based upon the same general principles and designed to promote the same mutually helpful and worthy ends. It was formed a few years after the war and utilized, as its place of trade, the so-called Bradbury store. It was temporarily successful, although suffering a decline afterward, having an experience very much like that of the “Union” just named. In 1877 its stock in trade was sold to Jerome Whitman, and the company dissolved.

**Village Improvement Society.** Chiefly through the agency of Revs. C. M. Palmer and Lyman Partridge, pastors of the Congregationalist and Baptist churches respectively, an association was started in January, 1884, the purposes and objects of which are sufficiently indicated by the name under which it was formally organized for active service. It seemed to strike a popular chord, being favorably received by all classes in the community, who responded generously to its appeals for membership, for money, and for active efforts to carry to a suc-





cessful issue the various projects instituted in the line of its purposed end and aim.

This society has been continuously active during the few years that have transpired since it was founded, has maintained a good standing, and been in divers ways serviceable to the public. It has not only laid sidewalks, set out shade trees, and made many other improvements that have added to the convenience and comfort of the people and to the attractiveness of the place, but it has developed a public spirit, a social feeling, and a sense of mutual inter-dependence and friendliness among those of different opinions, affiliations, callings, and positions in life, rarely, if ever before, realized in this community. Moreover, by its public meetings, held once a fortnight from September to May, and the varied exercises connected with them, it has contributed much to the general intelligence, the mental advancement, and the moral elevation of the community. Long may it live and prosper !

**Freemasonry.** It does not appear from any records that have come to hand that Freemasonry, as it is termed, was ever represented in town by an organized local lodge, but it is in evidence that there were members of other lodges here in considerable numbers at or soon after the close of the first quarter of the present century, some of whom, in times of misfortune, are known to have received substantial aid from the charity funds of the order. Subsequently, however, to the alleged abduction and murder, in 1826, of William Morgan, an apostate Mason of Western New York, for publishing the secrets of the institution, a strong anti-Masonic feeling sprang up in the community, which had its counterpart in, or perhaps was generated by, the prevailing interest and excitement throughout the entire country in the same behalf. Men known to be Masons were ostracized or regarded with suspicion, and public meetings were held for the purpose of exposing the presumptive iniquities and mischiefs of the mystic craft, and to institute measures for preventing its growth in numbers and in influence. Delegates were chosen to attend an anti-Masonic convention at Worcester, in aid of a widely extended movement for the suppression of what was supposed to be a gigantic evil menacing alike the Christian church and the institutions of civil and religious liberty.

The opposition to Masonry entered largely into the politics of the time. Anti-Masonic candidates for the Presidency solicited votes in the campaign of 1832, anti-Masonic Governors were elected in some of the States, and neighboring towns sent anti-Masonic representatives to the Massachusetts Legislature. In 1831 the subject made its first appearance in public town meeting here, Hon. Samuel Lathrop, anti-Masonic candidate for Governor, having 63 votes against 134 for Hon. Levi Lincoln, 14 for Hon. Marcus Morton, and 1 for Hon. Samuel



Hoar. The next year the vote for Mr. Lathrop was only 47, Dea. Benjamin F. Wood, corresponding candidate for town representative, having 48. A year later, 1833, the anti-Masonic candidate for Governor, John Quincy Adams, had 42 votes, while in 1834 Hon. John Bailey, candidate on the same ticket, had 22.

During the last named year the Legislature passed a law prohibiting "all extrajudicial oaths" under a heavy penalty, the result of which, supplementing the general agitation of the subject, was a great decline of interest in Freemasonry, and the abandonment of many of the lodges in this state as in others.

Twenty years later, however, a reaction set in, inaugurating an increase of the order in the country at large, never equaled before. As a great, world-wide fraternity, it is to-day characterised by abounding prosperity, nowhere more strikingly manifest than in the United States. Some twenty or thirty brethren of the mystic tie are there at the present time in Westminster, whose badges or symbols, frequently seen by the observing eye, betoken no injury or harm to any important interest of public or private life.

**Odd Fellowship.** This term represents a secret charitable organization similar to that last named, though without its prestige or high-sounding claims. It is said to have originated in England towards the latter part of the last century, and to have been introduced into this country in or about the year 1819. The disrepute into which Freemasonry fell soon after caused it to be regarded with suspicion for a time, but it at length gained a place in public confidence, and adherents to its principles increased with astonishing rapidity. The motto of the order, "Friendship, Love, and Truth," has a peculiar charm to it, and, if practically regarded, can be productive of only salutary and beneficent results. There is about the same number of Odd Fellows in Westminster as there are Masons, whose organic affiliations, like theirs, are with lodges, encampments, etc., in other localities.

**Gala Days and Celebrations.** During the period of this town's history there have been numerous public holidays or occasions of general rejoicing and festivity, which have constituted a not altogether unimportant part of the life of the people. They have usually been observed in connection with some special interest or department of activity, whose presentation in its appropriate place in this volume, includes all the notice of them that seems to be required. Such were the "One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the 'embodiment' of the First Church," the "Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Baptist Church," the "Westminster Academy Reunion," etc. Others there have been of a less signal character, to which only the merest allusion can be made. To this class



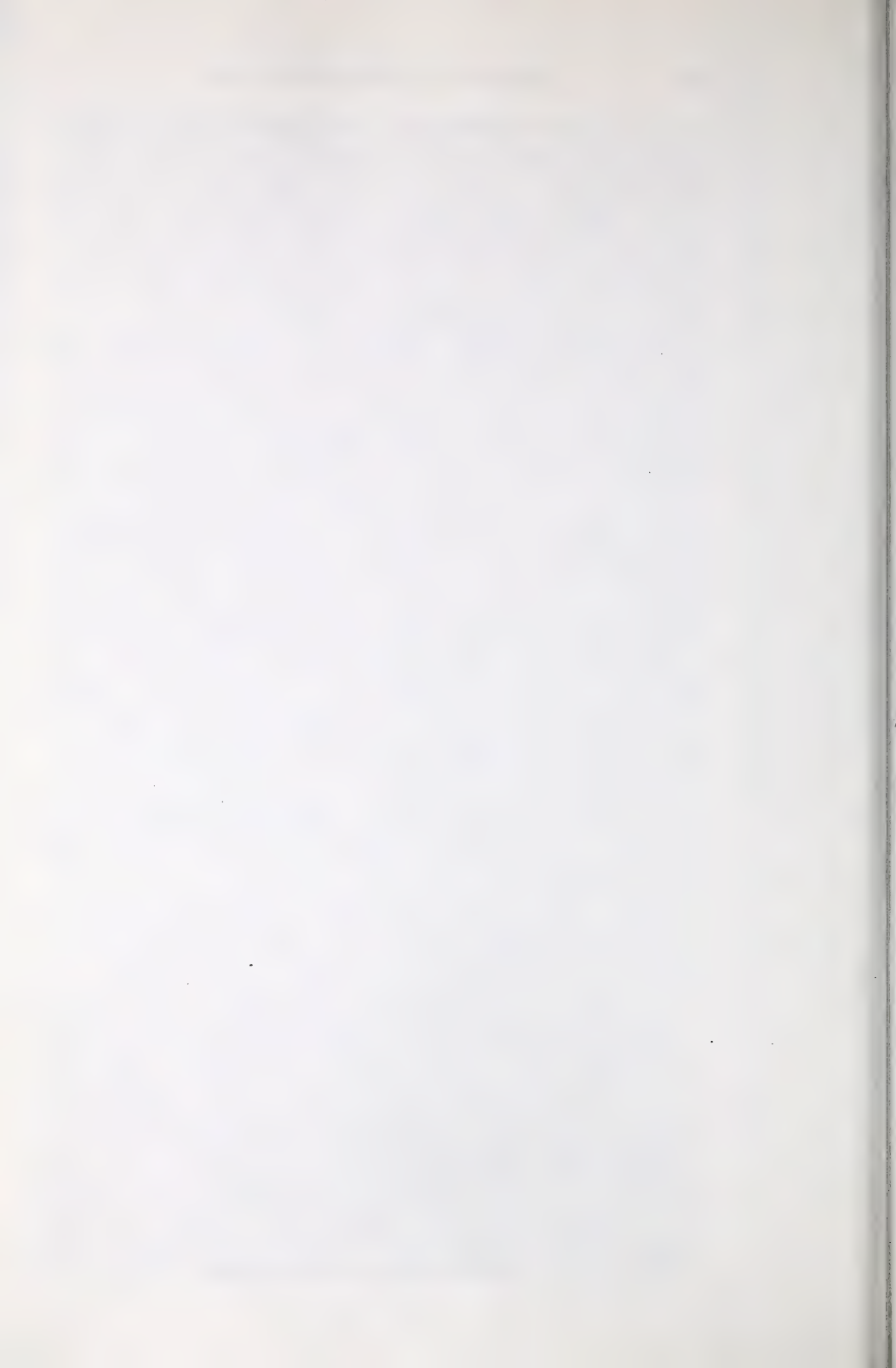


belong occasional celebrations of the Fourth of July, which, for the most part, have combined a patriotic purpose with some important matter of public utility or moral reform, like temperance, anti-slavery, or education. The several churches, in addition to what has been alluded to, have had their respective seasons of sacred commemoration or innocent recreation, while the public schools have enjoyed their repeated "outings," for health, instruction, or pleasure, as arranged by the several teachers and the superintending committee.

**Old Folks' Picnic.** Under this designation there has been held at Wachusett Park for some fifteen years past an annual gathering of more than ordinary interest and importance, enlisting, as it does, the attention and co-operation of large numbers of people in this and neighboring localities. It was started in a small way and for a temporary purpose in 1878, with little or no expectation in regard to what might come of it in after years. The late Mrs. Hollis Bolton, of her own motion at the outset, proposed inviting a few of the elderly people of the neighborhood to come together on a stated summer day, for a pleasant time—for mutual congratulation, interchange of thought, and social recreation. The proposition met with favor, and proper means were taken for carrying it into effect.

As a result, there assembled a goodly number of those far advanced in years—men and women,—together with many of their relatives and friends, all of whom found it to be a season of such unqualified pleasure and satisfaction that a desire for its repetition spontaneously arose and was freely expressed. That desire crystalized into fact the following year,—an increased attendance and increased interest characterizing the event and opening the way for subsequent gatherings of the same sort. And so it has continued from year to year until there has been built up a permanent custom,—in a certain sense, an established institution of the town.

Though the occasion still retains its original name, yet it interests and brings together not the aged only, but all conditions and classes of people from within the town's borders, and also many friends and former residents from outside, all of whom find in it much satisfaction and delight. It is duly announced and provided for by a committee chosen each year for the purpose, one of whose duties it is to prepare a programme of exercises, more or less formal, with which to engage the attention of those who may be present, and give character and dignity to the day. Those exercises are composed usually of singing, prayer, speech making, and the reading of letters from absent friends—the singing consisting largely of old time pieces, and the speaking and reading dealing chiefly with historical fact and incident, or personal reminiscence. Outside of all this there is ample time for social and friendly intercourse with all the amenities and courtesies therein implied. Though now



continuing for many years, it is still held in high favor by the people generally, and seems destined to abide permanently in the community. In good weather several hundred persons are in attendance, whose chief regret about it is that its hours pass so swiftly away. Until recently it has been held on the Wednesday occurring nearest the 20th of June, but the better to suit the convenience and leisure of the larger number interested in it, the time has been changed to a corresponding day in the month of August.

Beside the times and seasons adverted to and described, there have been *three* of a more general and comprehensive nature, and withal distinctively historical, in which the inhabitants of the town, irrespective of party, sect, or class, have had an interest, and to which they have all to a greater or less extent contributed. These will be noticed in the order of their occurrence.

**1. The Municipal Centenary.** Pursuant to the request of prominent citizens desirous of having some appropriate recognition made of the one hundredth anniversary of the incorporation of the town, which was to transpire on the 20th of October, 1859, a legal meeting was called Aug. 22d of that year, at which, after satisfactory discussion of the subject, it was voted

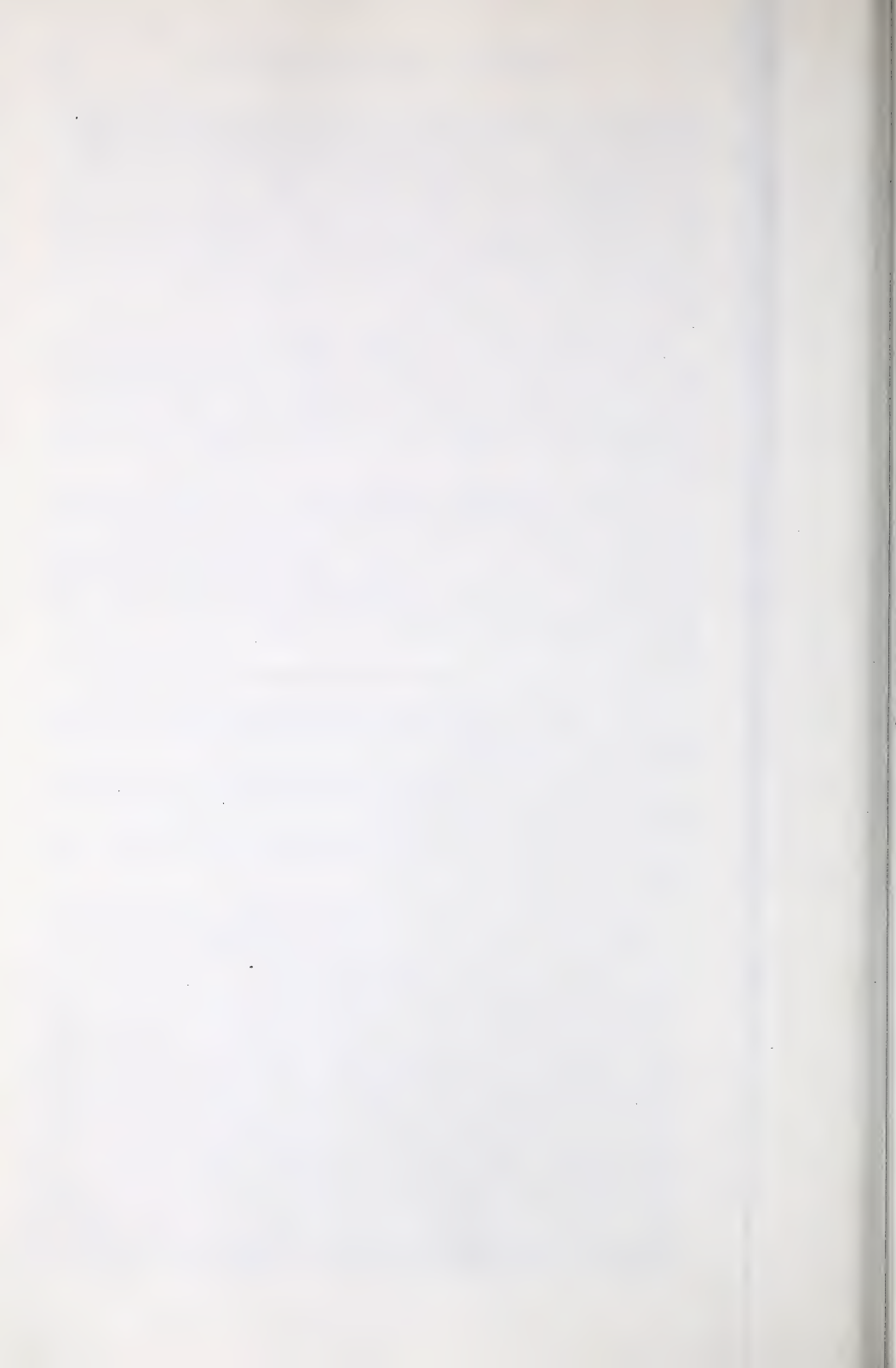
"1. To celebrate the approaching anniversary of the incorporation of the town.

"2. To choose a committee of arrangements, consisting of fifteen persons, to have charge of all matters pertaining to the proper and creditable observance of the occasion.

"3. To authorize the selectmen to audit the accounts of the committee and give orders on the treasury for the payment of the same to an amount not exceeding fifteen hundred dollars.

"4. To instruct the committee to cause the address and other proceedings of the occasion to be printed in sufficient numbers to supply every voter in town a copy, if they think best."

In accordance with these votes a committee was chosen with Joel Merriam, Jr., as chairman, and activities were at once put in motion for the successful accomplishment of the end in view. Inasmuch as the neighboring town of Princeton, which was incorporated on the same day as Westminster, had already effected arrangements for celebrating the event on the exact anniversary of its occurrence, Oct. 20th, it was deemed advisable to anticipate the time by two weeks, and the 6th of the month was therefore fixed upon for the Westminster festivities. Under the direction of the general committee ample preparations were made for the rare and interesting occasion. A cordial invitation was sent out to the sons and daughters of the town, scattered far and wide through the land, to return and share the hospitalities of the resident citizens of their birth-place, and the pleasures of its centennial day. Before that day dawned the village was elaborately decorated, many a flag floated



in the breeze, large quantities of bunting fashioned into chaste and pleasing devices graced both public and private buildings, while words of welcome and good cheer greeted the eye on every hand. A spacious platform had been erected under the broad branches of the venerable elms on the "Old Common," where the principal exercises of the occasion were to take place. Near by, on the open plateau, a large tent had been spread, beneath which the collation prepared by a Leominster caterer was to be served and the postprandial speeches made. All things seemed in readiness for the great and notable event, and the evening before was auspicious of a happy realization of the wishes of all concerned.

The morning dawned full of promise. A hundred guns announced the arrival of the important day, and woke the town from its more or less disturbed repose. All were astir ere the hours had far advanced, and as they went hastening by, the streets filled rapidly with the people of the place, their already arrived guests, and the multitude coming in from the country round about. "A thousand hearts beat happily," "music arose with its voluptuous swell," and all were expectant of a delightful time.

But the day did not prove as propitious as was hoped. A gentle breeze sprang up ere the sun had ascended far in the eastern sky, which gradually increased in force and violence until it became a veritable gale, filling the air with dust and sand, making havoc with bunting, flags, and other articles of adorning, and seriously threatening the dinner tent and what was beneath it, rendering special appliances needful to make it safe and sure.

Nevertheless, it was deemed advisable to enter upon the proceedings of the occasion as provided for by the Committee of Arrangements, and this was accordingly done under the immediate direction of the following

#### OFFICERS OF THE DAY.

*President*, — Benjamin Wyman.

*Vice-Presidents*, — William S. Bradbury, George Miles, Samuel G. Kendall, David Whitney, Joel Merriam, Anson Spalding, Franklin Wyman, Benjamin F. Wood, Stillman Brooks, Manasseh S. Forbush, Jonas Miller, Edward Bacon, Aaron Wood.

*Toastmasters*, — Daniel C. Miles, Frederick Allen.

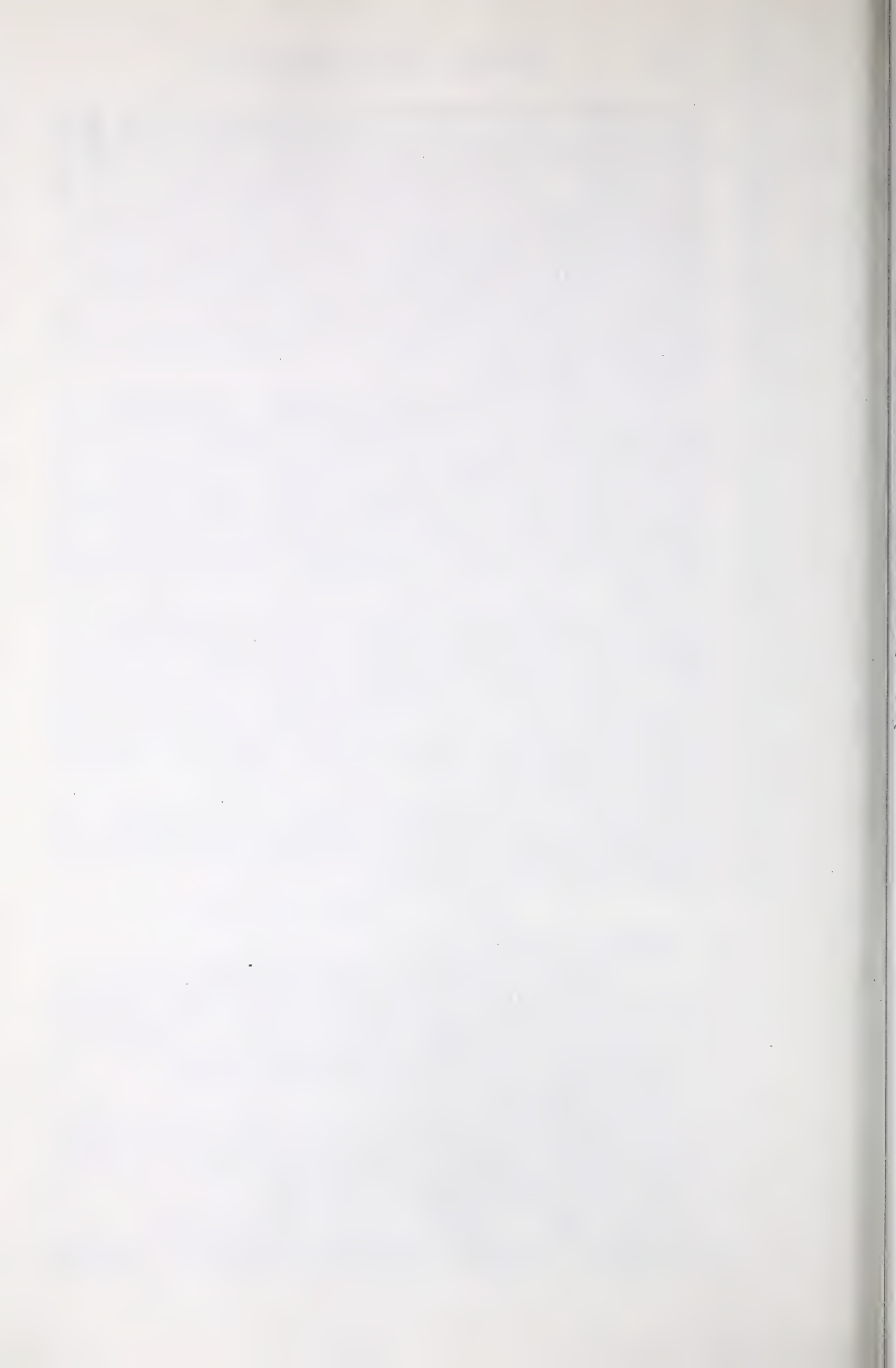
*Chief Marshal*, — John Minott.

*Assistant Marshals*, — Joseph W. Forbush, Daniel C. Miles, Artemas Merriam, Philander C. Brown, Joseph M. Whitman, Amos B. Holden, James R. Bruce, Franklin Howe, Caleb S. Merriam, Major Page, Augustine Whitney.

*Clerks*, — Clinton Warner, M. D., Charles H. Stearns.

At ten o'clock a procession was formed at the Town Hall and moved, as rapidly as circumstances would allow, through



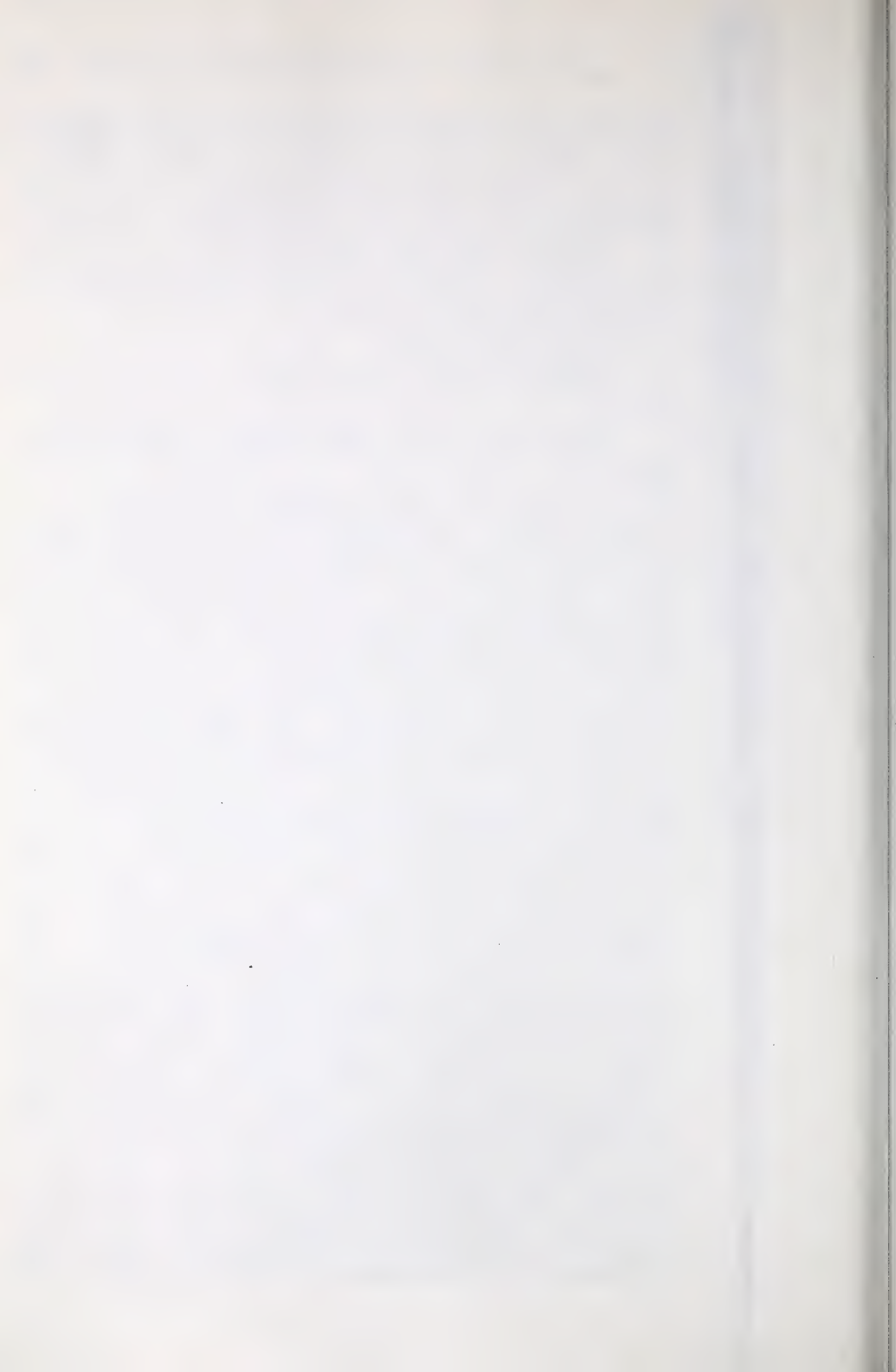


Main Street to the place designated for the principal exercises of the occasion. The fire companies of Gardner and Westminster—three in number—accompanied by Worcester, Fitchburg, and Gardner cornet bands, performed escort duty, the latter filling the air with their inspiring strains. Arriving at the "Common," where seats had been provided in front of the stage referred to, the assemblage, numbering about twenty-five hundred persons, came into as much of quiet as possible, and the exercises proceeded as follows:

1. Music by the bands.
2. Anthem by the Centenary Choir.
3. Reading of Scripture by Rev. Brown Emerson of Westminster.
4. Prayer by the Chaplain, Rev. Marcus Ames of Chelsea.
5. Original hymn by Lucy B. Whitney, sung by the congregation.
6. Address by Hon. Charles Hudson of Lexington.

The preliminary proceedings were carried through under great difficulty, and to little edification or pleasure, by reason of the fury of the elements, and Mr. Hudson began his address under circumstances most untoward and forbidding. It soon became evident that his labors were vain, only a few of the great assemblage in close proximity to him being able to hear what he was saying. It was therefore deemed advisable to adjourn to the church of the First Parish for the further execution of the morning's programme. This being found much too small to accommodate all desiring admission, an overflow meeting was held in the Universalist Church on the opposite side of the street, where the poet of the occasion, Rev. William S. Heywood of Hopedale, Milford, read his production—the services going on in the two places simultaneously. So much time had been consumed, however, by the extra movements and delays occasioned by the weather, that only a small portion of the prepared oration was delivered—an omission in good degree compensated by the subsequent publication of it in full for general circulation. It was distinctively retrospective and historical in its character, and evinced much and varied research, careful preparation, and a thoughtful appreciation of the requirements of the occasion. In its printed form, of which there was a large edition, it served as a satisfactory "History of Westminster" for a generation, containing much valuable information for the people of the town and the general public, as well as offering many important suggestions to the writer of this work, for which he is happy to make due acknowledgment.

The poem by the author of this work opened with a brief allusion to the occasion, and, after paying respectful tribute to the town of which he was a native and to the old Bay State, passed to a brief presentation of the high themes of life, man, and destiny as he contemplated and estimated them. It was



published, as were all the important proceedings of the day, in connection with the centennial address.

At the close of the exercises in the churches the procession re-formed and passed to the tent mentioned, where the collation was partaken of by some twelve hundred persons and where, dinner being over, further speaking, with accompanying vocal and instrumental music, took place.

The President of the day made an appropriate address of welcome, and was followed by the Toastmasters, whose well-chosen sentiments were responded to by Rev. S. S. Smith of Warren, a former pastor in the place, Rev. Dr. Allen, the husband of Myra Wood, missionary to Bombay, Levi Miller of Antwerp, N. Y., Goodwin Wood of Fitchburg, Clough R. Miles, Esq., of Milbury, Rev. Charles Kendall of Petersham, Rev. Franklin Merriam of New Boston, N. H., Rev. Joseph Peckham of Kingston, the last six natives of the place, and by Charles Hudson, the orator of the day, Edwin Glazier, Esq., and Allen Folger of Gardner. Letters were also read from Dr. Joel Wyman of Beaufort, S. C., Hon. Charles B. Hoard, M. C., of Watertown, N. Y., natives, and from Rev. O. H. White, a former pastor of the First Church and parish.

In the evening the Congregational Church was again well filled with an interested and enthusiastic audience. Friendly greetings were renewed, impromptu speeches made, additional sentiments offered and responded to, the whole being interspersed with singing. At a late hour the services closed with a benediction, and the Westminster Centennial passed into history.

**The National Centenary.** The one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the American Declaration of Independence occurred on the 4th of July, 1876. In anticipation of the event, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, President of the United States, issued a proclamation calling upon cities and towns throughout the land to take note of the same and duly honor it by public celebrations of a character calculated to commemorate the founding of a great and mighty nation upon the principles of civil and religious liberty and the inalienable rights of mankind. In response thereto, the day was appropriately observed in every part of the United States by all classes of the population. Scarce a municipality, large or small, was anywhere to be found, certainly in all the north, in which some demonstration of love and loyalty to a united and redeemed Republic did not take place.

At a town meeting held early in the month of June, the citizens voted not to hold a public celebration at the time indicated. Whereupon, by recommendation of the selectmen, the matter was taken in hand by private parties, active among whom was Dr. George B. Swazey, a meeting being called, at which there was a good attendance, much interest manifested, and a vote





passed to observe the day in some suitable and patriotic manner. A committee of arrangements was chosen to make all needful provision for carrying that vote into effect, which was accordingly done.

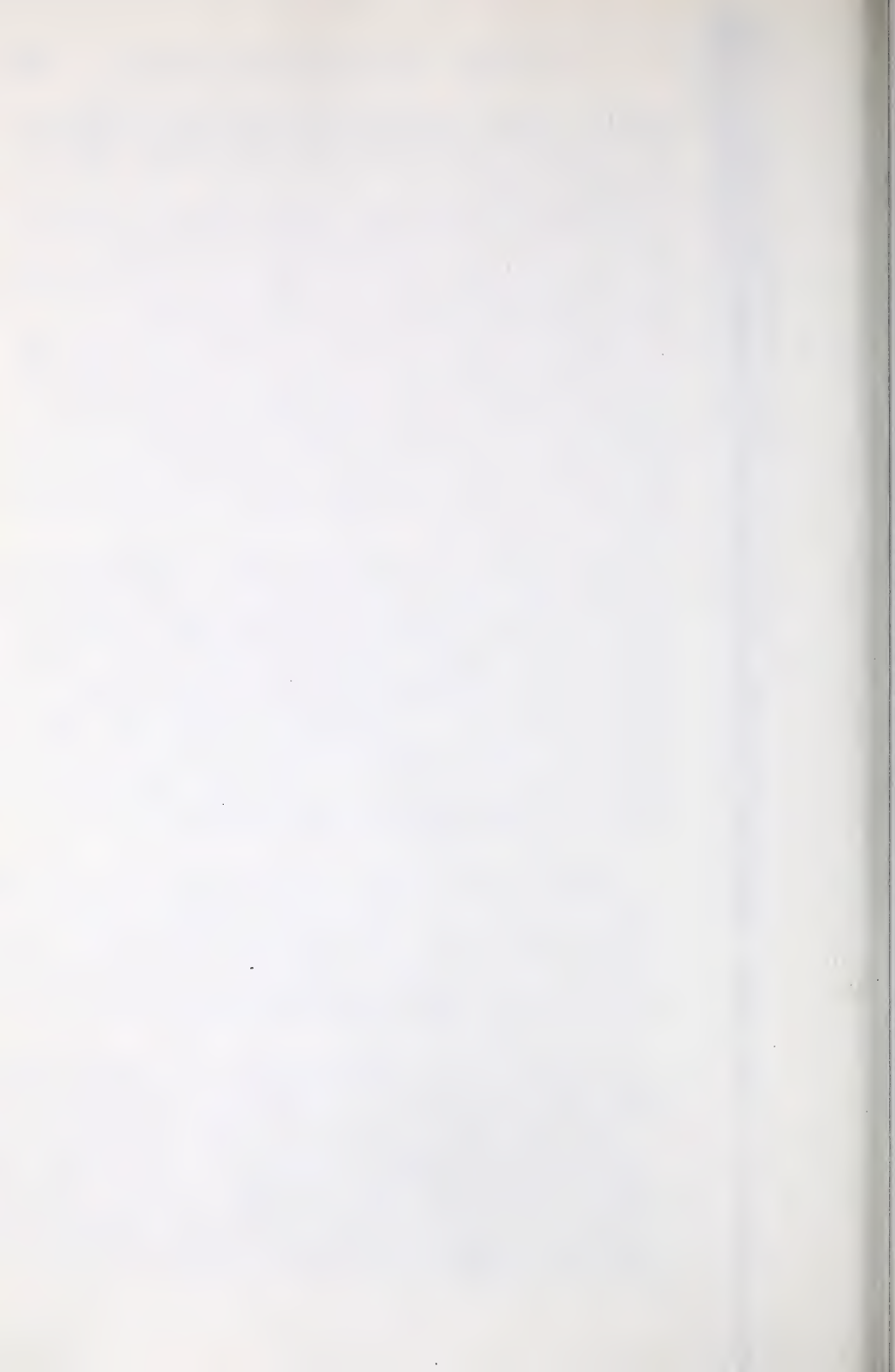
Inasmuch as all other towns in the vicinity had a celebration of their own, this one was distinctively a local affair, although it had much wider, even national relations and significance. No records of it have been found, and only a few items pertaining to it can therefore be mentioned in this connection.

A large tent was pitched upon the Common, beneath which the more formal services of the occasion were held. Daniel C. Miles acted as President of the day, and Herbert Howe had charge of the literary and musical exercises. Rev. William S. Heywood of Holyoke gave the principal address, which was of a distinctively national and patriotic character. Of the nature and spirit of it and of the occasion which called it forth, a few extracts, selected indiscriminately from its pages, will furnish satisfactory indications :

"This is America's jubilee year—a year of historic meaning and worth, of patriotic memories, of national festivity and joy—a year that speaks to us of noble deeds and heroic achievements wrought and won for liberty's sake and to promote the God-derived, inalienable rights of mankind. A year it is whose airs are scented with that spirit of sublime self-consecration, faith in God, and devotion to the principles of human freedom, which animated the breasts of noble men and women dwelling in the flesh a hundred years ago,—a year that awakens deep, tender, and mighty emotions in the popular heart, and swells to no common flow the tide of patriotic feeling in the soul of every true son and daughter of a country, whose history is luminous with illustrious examples of high and consecrated living, whose progress in the arts of civilized society and in the elements of national greatness and renown outvies that of any other realm beneath the sun, and whose benefits and blessings to all classes and conditions of people challenge the competition and the admiration of the world."

"What profits it that we keep this holiday, if it do not tend to quicken in us the love of liberty and of man, if it do not confirm us more and more in the principles of all righteous government! What does it avail, that we pronounce eulogies upon those whose fidelity and disinterestedness, whose wisdom and high character made the Republic possible, and whose blood nourished it into vigorous growth—what, that we sing their honors all abroad and make the airs of the land vocal with their praise, if we do not catch their spirit, if we scorn for ourselves personally the toils and sacrifices that made their names truly great and their fame immortal!"

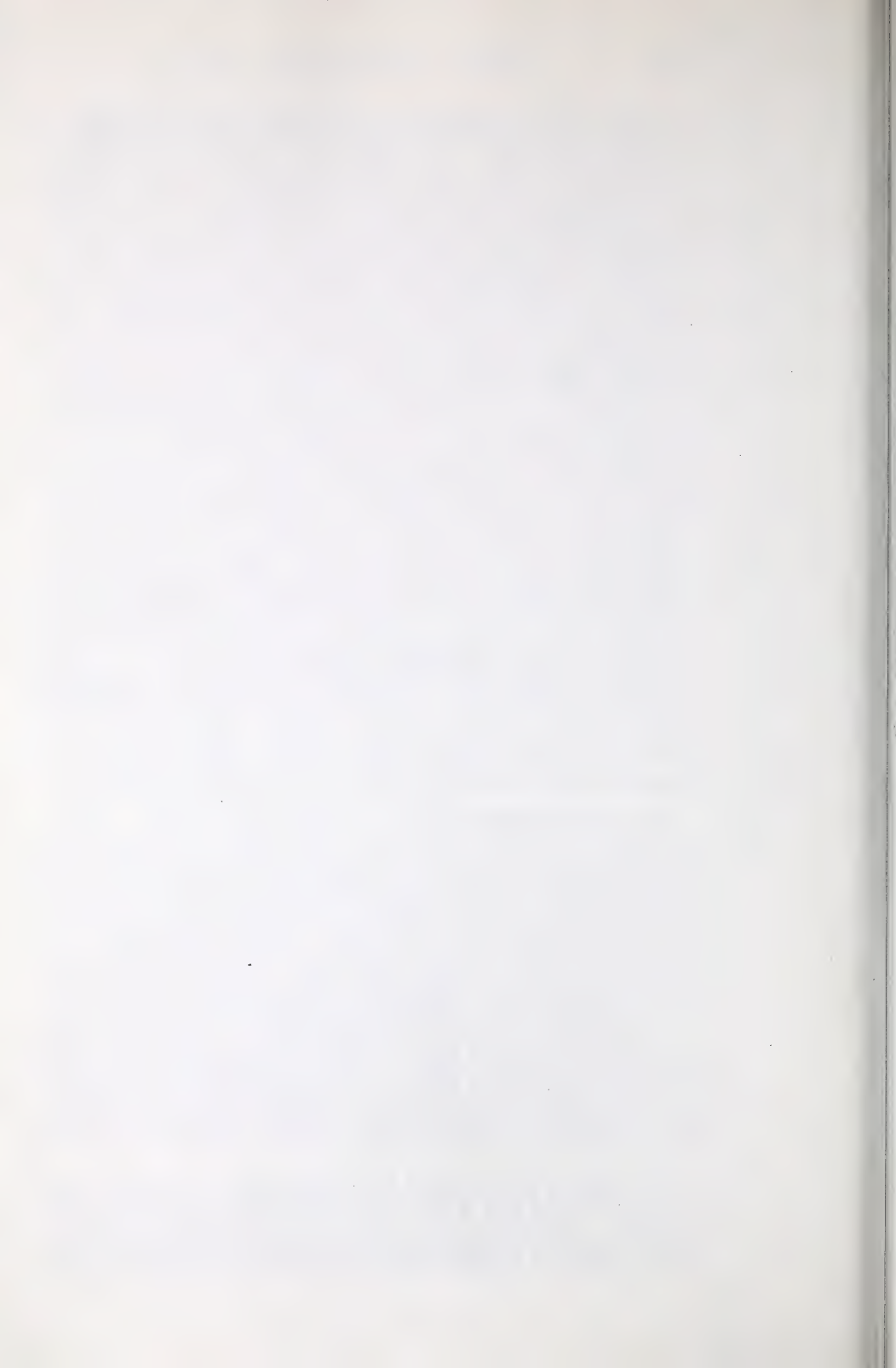
"We should run over the story of the fathers in order that their fidelity to great principles and to the public welfare may stimulate us to active efforts in the same behalf and our children after us to many generations. We should linger around the cradle of our country's independence to-day, in order to catch an inspiration wherewith we may be enabled to help justify to posterity and to all mankind the deeds that they wrought,—deeds which startled the world by their novelty and daring, and which we profess to hold in grateful remembrance. Taking the heritage of the fathers, we should cherish it as a sacred trust, guarding and using it well, and, in our turn and time, pass it on to those coming after us, not simply unimpaired, but enriched and ennobled by our own contributions of wisdom, virtue, and sacrifice, disinterestedly given to it."



After noting somewhat at length the material resources of the country and their wonderful development during the century past and gone,—after delineating the marvelous advances that had been made during the same period in the multifarious arts and appliances characteristic of a high state of civilization, to which she had so largely contributed,—after paying respectful and grateful homage to those institutions of learning which she had made so essential to her existence and perpetuity, and to the type of domestic life so vital to virtue and piety, and to the public and private well-being, illustrated in the American home, the address proceeded to sketch the history of the Republic from the beginning, with special reference to that anomaly in her experience,—that crime against God and humanity, which had vitiated her entire social and civil polity and brought her at length to the verge of dissolution,—CHattel SLAVERY. Tracing briefly the workings of the system of American bondage through the swiftly passing years to its final issue and overthrow in the great Rebellion of 1861–1865, it pictured an emancipated nation and a Republic glorified by an act of justice on the part of its chief executive, upon which he invoked “the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.” It then went on to set forth and enforce the essential conditions of prosperity and happiness under free institutions, under a government “of the people, for the people, and by the people,” and to point out still prevailing evils which threatened the common welfare and the national existence, and to utter earnest and solemn warnings against them. Yet were the warnings mingled with words of encouragement and hope, as a brief passage near the close of the address will show:

“But I am no prophet of despair. I believe in the Republic. I believe it has a future. I believe that the greatness and glory of it in the past are but a faint symbol of the greatness and glory of it to be revealed in some sure-coming, better hereafter. I hint at the dangers that beset the ship of state, not as a bearer of bad tidings or herald of approaching doom, but as a faithful monitor, to the end that they may be seen and averted, and that she, ‘staunch and strong, a goodly vessel,’ may ride triumphantly on the billows of yet untried seas to the end of time. Not by blind indifference to threatening ills, not by denying their existence or under-estimating their deleterious power, do we make the future sure to our great inheritance, but by duly recognizing and confronting them, by heroically grappling with them, overcoming them and putting them forever away. Nor is the same exalted end secured by any arts of magic or cunningly devised policies, nor by the manipulations of partisan jugglers or self-seeking demagogues, but by pure and lofty statesmanship, by steadfast devotion to just principles, by integrity and honor in private and public life, by renewed characters and exalted aims everywhere prevailing, ‘by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’”

The address was followed by a poem prepared for the occasion and read by Mrs. Sarah H. Whitman, and by miscellaneous speaking. Sentiments were offered and duly responded to, and music, vocal and instrumental, gave additional interest and in-





spiration to an occasion characterized by a patriotic purpose and devotion to the welfare of the Republic.

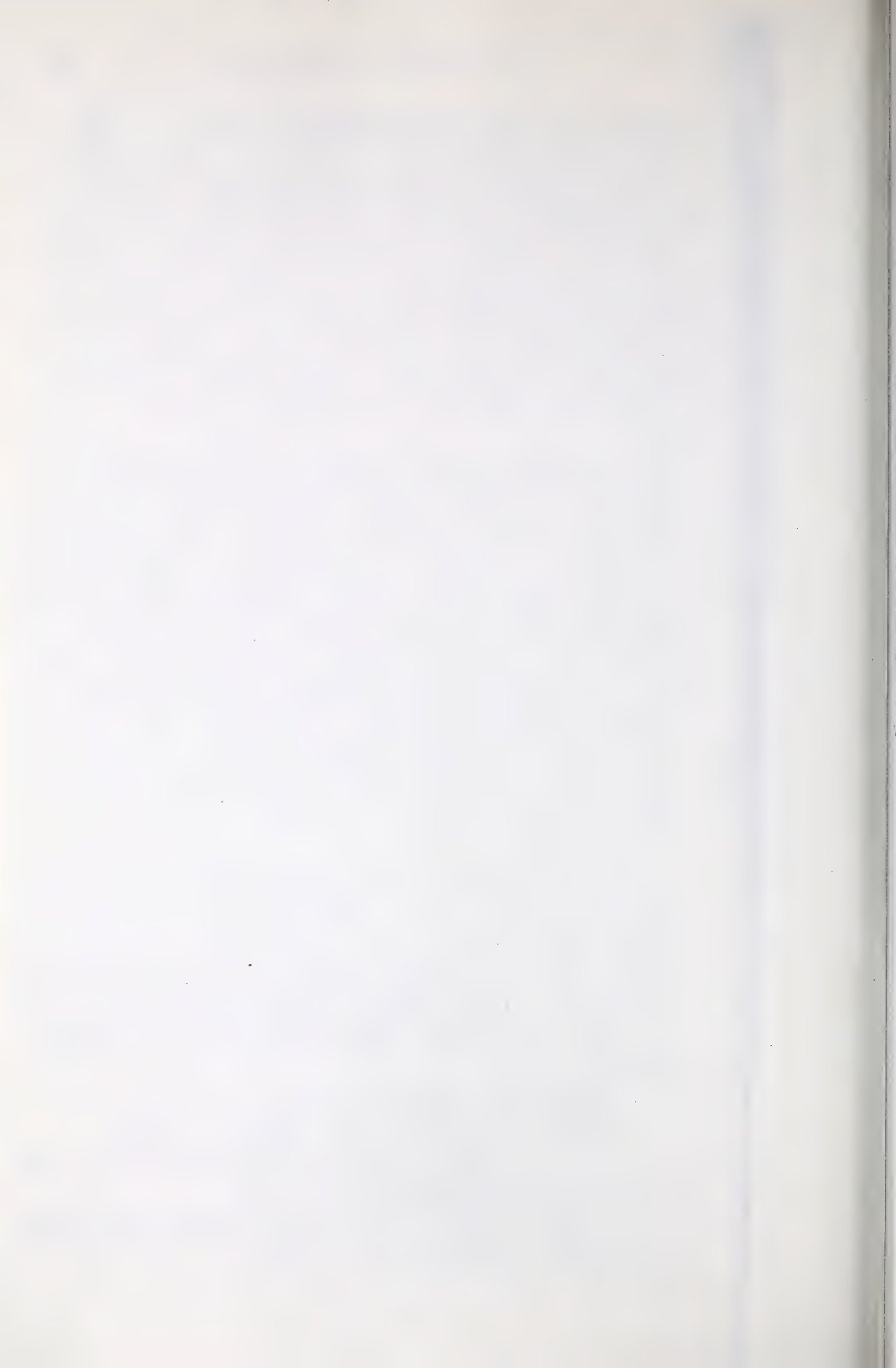
**The Sesqui-Centennial.** At the annual March meeting in 1887, a proposition contemplating the formal observance of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of the town was submitted for the consideration of the citizens and for such disposal as they might deem advisable. The project met with general favor and it was voted "to celebrate the event in an appropriate manner" on "the Wednesday nearest the 20th of June," which would be the 22d—the exact date of the arrival of the first comers here not being determined. A committee of arrangements, of which Artemas Merriam was Chairman, was chosen to carry into effect the action of the town.

This committee attended faithfully to the duty assigned them, their plans and labors being seconded by the cordial co-operation of the people at large. Cards of invitation were sent far and wide to sons and daughters of Westminster and to leading citizens of neighboring towns, soliciting their participation in the proposed festivities. Well devised and ample preparations were made for the occasion. Imposing arches of evergreen were erected over Main Street—one a few rods west of the hotel, the other a little below the Soldiers' monument—on which were words of welcome and congratulation. There was a liberal display of flags, bunting, and other emblems of a festive and patriotic character. A generous hospitality was proffered to all who might accept the invitation to be present, and everything was done that could reasonably have been expected to suit the occasion to the purpose for which it was designed, to make it pleasant to all taking part in it, and worthy of remembrance.

The day, however, did not prove as favorable as had been hoped, the threatening aspect of the weather, with frequent dashes of rain, limiting the attendance and interfering with some of the proposed outdoor demonstrations. Nevertheless, a large audience gathered at ten o'clock in the Congregational Church, where the proposed programme of exercises was to be carried out. Artemas Merriam had been appointed *president of the day* and J. Hervey Miller, *chief marshal*, with numerous assistants. The services began and went forward in the following order, to wit:

1. Music by the Fitchburg band.
2. Prayer by the chaplain, Rev. Charles M. Palmer.
3. Address of welcome by the president of the day.
4. Song of greeting, written by Sarah B. Whitney and sung by the united choirs of the town.
5. Historical address by Rev. Wm. S. Heywood of Boston.
6. Song, "Vive l'America" by Mrs. F. P. Whitney of Boston, a native of the town.

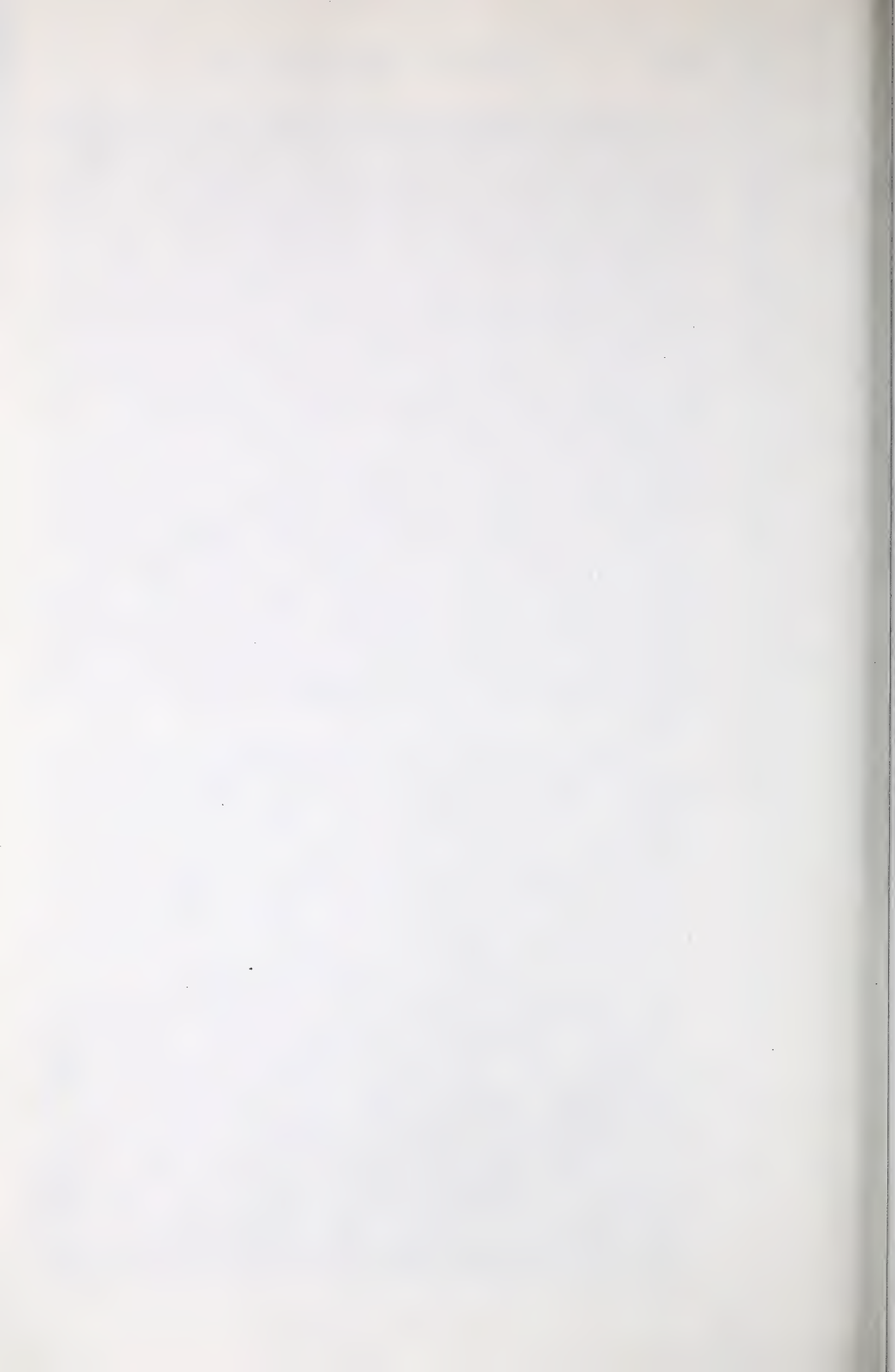




The address was of the nature indicated by its title, "Mosaics of Westminster History," and could not be reproduced in these pages without repeating much that has been more appropriately presented in other connections. It opened with a fitting commendatory allusion to the founding of New England and to those participating in that notable and heroic achievement, and proceeded thence to a hasty review of the causes which led to the settlement of the town and the circumstances connected with that event, including a brief sketch of the two first comers here, Fairbanks Moor and Joseph Holden, with some notice of their families. It went on from that point to the presentation of numerous retrospective pictures or descriptive reports of incidents and events, somewhat desultory and unrelated, that had transpired during the period of one hundred and fifty years, avoiding so far as possible the ground so well covered by Mr. Hudson in his "Centennial Oration," and yet holding the line of thought and expression true to the spirit and purpose of the occasion. The whole concluded with some general reflections upon the character and moral quality of the inhabitants of Westminster from the beginning, upon the worthy work done at home or in other places by her sons and daughters in various fields of useful service, and upon the desirability and importance of so using the blessings received from past generations as that they should be transmitted, not simply unimpaired, but freighted with new power of good and happiness to generations yet to come.

At the close of the services in the church, a procession was formed under the direction of the chief marshal, which moved directly, without lengthening its march as had been proposed through the several parts of the village, to a spacious tent pitched on the open grounds lying west of the hotel. The order of advance was as follows: 1. Chief Marshal; 2. Fitchburg Band, with appropriate music; 3. Westminster fire company; 4. President of the day, Orator, Chaplain, etc.; 5. Committee of arrangements and Clergy; 6. Town officers and invited guests; 7. Representatives of the press; 8. Combined choirs; 9. Aged persons; 10. Citizens at large, etc.

The exercises at the tent were: 1. Thanks and Invocation; 2. Dinner; 3. Poem by Hon. John M. Moore of Gardner; 4. Sentiment—Our relations with Westminster; 5. Responses as follows: Maj. F. D. Fosdick, Fitchburg; William P. Ellis, Ashburnham; Hamilton Mayo, Esq., Leominster; W. H. Howe, Hubbardston; John D. Edgell, Esq., and Charles F. Read, Gardner; Dea. Joshua T. Everett, Princeton. These exercises were interspersed with music by the band, singing by Mrs. F. P. Whitney, reading of letters from Levi Miller of Antwerp, N. Y., George Wood of Jamestown, N. Y., and others; the whole concluding with an anniversary hymn prepared for the occasion by Mrs. Anna Curtis Roper, and sung by



the united assemblage to the familiar tune of "Auld Lang Syne."

The afternoon, to the delight of all concerned, proved more pleasant and agreeable than the morning promised. The sun broke through and mostly dispelled the clouds before its hours were far spent, enabling large numbers of people from the outlying and neighboring districts, who had been deterred by the threatening aspect of the weather from putting in an earlier appearance, to come and share the pleasures and privileges of the latter part of the day. The tent and streets were now thronged, and everything betokened a gala day indeed—an occasion of unusual interest and importance in the history of the town. At five o'clock the band gave an out-door concert, filling the air with strains of delightful music and lending enchantment to the afternoon's declining hours. The celebration closed with a highly satisfactory display of fireworks on the Common in the evening.





## CHAPTER XXII.

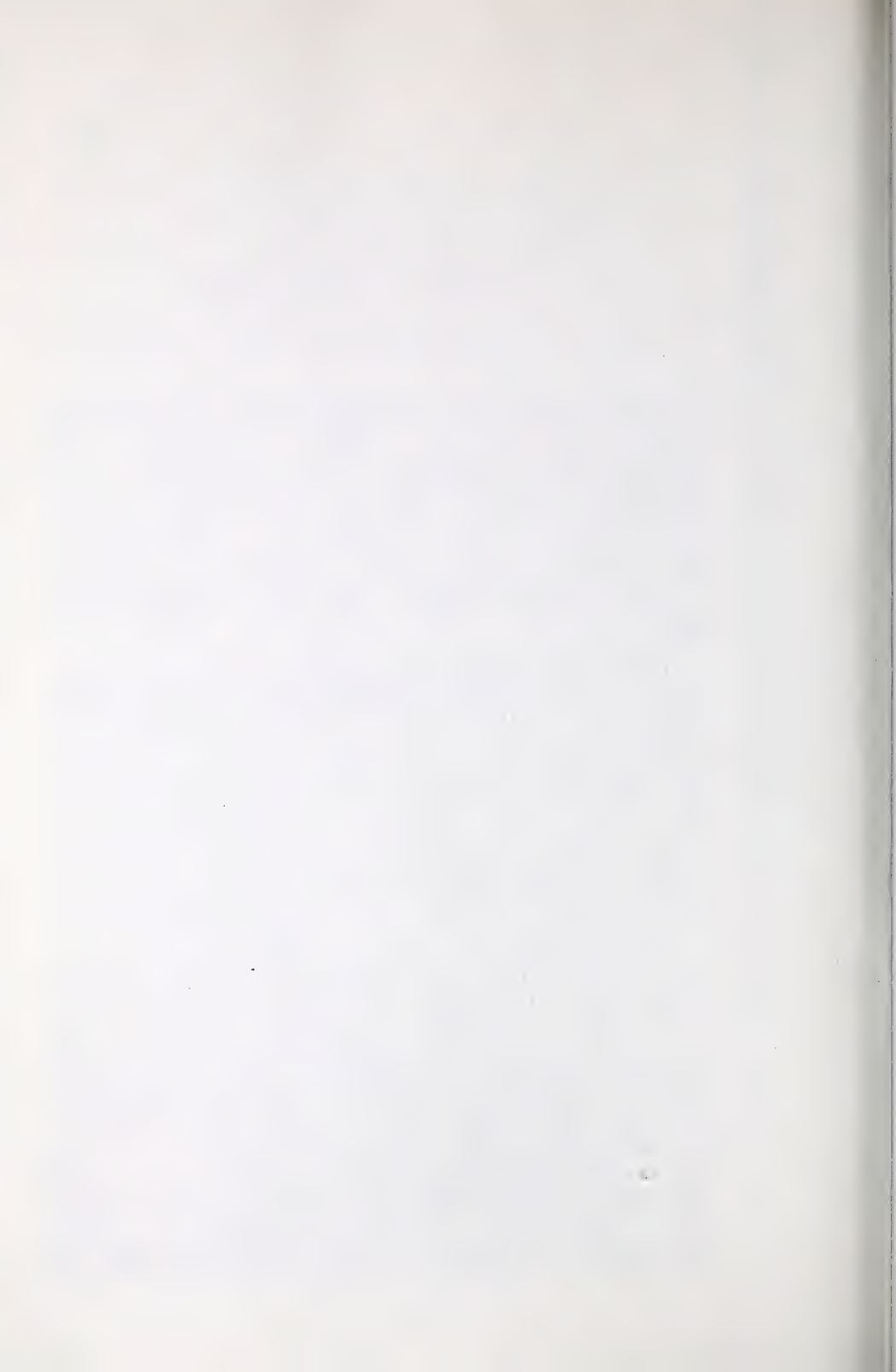
### A BUDGET OF MISCELLANIES.

ITEMS, MORE OR LESS IMPORTANT, HITHERTO UNNOTICED—  
TALES OF "YE OLDEN TIME."

IN order to make the survey contemplated in this volume as complete and satisfactory as possible, it is necessary to note certain items of historical significance or of general public interest, either not mentioned or but casually alluded to in the preceding pages, and to these the present chapter is particularly devoted. They are heterogeneous in nature and in character, having, with few exceptions, little in common, and hence are incapable of classification or methodical arrangement. They are therefore offered to the reader in that desultory, promiscuous order of succession which their dissimilarity renders imperative.

**Vocal and Instrumental Music.** There seems to have existed in the community from the beginning a very considerable amount of native musical talent, and much attention, under both public and private auspices, has been given from time to time to its cultivation and use. The town, as the guardian of the religious interests of the people, made provision at an early date for the orderly conduct of the service of song in the established exercises of the house of worship, choosing competent leaders, or "moderlators of the psalm," as they were called, determining what books should be used, etc., and also, in due season, providing means and methods for instruction in this important department of a complete education.

On the 22d of October, 1789, soon after the second meeting-house was built, the citizens "voted and granted £2 8s. for a Singing School this winter" and "chose Joseph Holden, Lieut. Hoar, and Isaac Williams a committee to agree with the master." The same sum was voted the following year and a corresponding committee was appointed, and this became the fixed policy of the town for about thirty years; the appropriation gradually increasing in amount, however, till it reached its maximum, \$30, in 1808. The first teacher of music here, as far as known, was Abel Wood, who was employed for several years and was succeeded by Cyrus Winship, a long-time incumbent of that position. Others serving in the same capacity under town direction were a Mr. Ichabod Johnson, Luke Bigelow, and Ezra Wood. Later workers in the same field were





MRS. FRED P. WHITNEY.



Abel Wood, 2d, George F. Miller, noted as a teacher of children, Jonathan Farnsworth, Charles Upton, etc.

The "choir" connected with the town church in the early part of the century attained a wide reputation, not only for its size, numbering at times thirty or forty persons, but for the excellence of its performances. It had no superior, and perhaps no equal, in the north part of Worcester County, and its renderings on important public occasions were exceedingly attractive and meritorious, receiving many encomiums both from the general public and from experts in such matters. The same praiseworthy qualities have characterized to a greater or less extent its lineal successor, the choir of the First Parish, under the efficient leadership of George F. Miller, Harrison G. Whitney, and others.

The choirs of the other societies have also had a good name in the community, and at times have risen to a high standard of proficiency in the divine art of sacred song.

Subsequently to the date of the disintegration of the town church, the responsibility of maintaining musical culture among the people has devolved largely upon the several religious societies resulting therefrom,—a trust which they have discharged with a commendable degree of liberality, fidelity, and efficiency. Recently, however, singing has been introduced into the public schools, where it had been incidentally practiced for many years, as a part of the regular course of study,—an innovation worthy of public approval and support, and destined, no doubt, to universal adoption.

Among the families in which the musical faculty has seemed to be indigenous and easy of manifestation, rising to reputable prominence under different forms of expression, may be mentioned those of Winship, Wood, Bigelow, Miller, Barnes, Kendall, Merriam, Cutting, and Minott, while many individuals of other names have evinced much more than ordinary talent of the same sort. Two women, one a native and the other an adopted daughter of the town, Mrs. Mary (Merriam) Whitney, now of Boston, and Mrs. Jennie (Twichell) Kempton of Chicago, have acquired distinction and honor by their richly endowed and highly cultivated gift of song. Of their musical character and career further notice will be taken in the genealogical department of this work.

Some fifty years ago a brass band was organized by a body of musically-inclined young men, and for many years maintained its place among the recognized institutions of the community. Under the leadership of Reuben W. Twichell, an accomplished master of his art, it rose to something of distinction for its fine appearance, its temperance principles, and the superiority of its achievements. It was regarded with honorable pride at home, and much sought for abroad on important festive and commemorative public occasions, when it elicited universal





commendation and reflected honor upon itself and upon the town to which it belonged.

A second band was organized in the year 1876, chiefly through the efforts of John G. F. Urban, a German townsman of much musical ability, who became its leader. It consisted of sixteen pieces, and proved itself capable of good service, but had an existence of only a few years.

An event of great interest to those immediately concerned, and many others, was the introduction of the first piano into the town, about the year 1837. Rarely has there been such curiosity awakened among the people and such eager desire for its gratification, as the advent of this wonderful instrument occasioned, and great numbers came from all directions to see it and to hear the enchanting strains that, under the skilful touch of its mistress, Miss Maria Whitman, it could be made to produce. It was from the manufactory of Woodward & Brown, Boston, and can still be seen at the home of Mrs. Jerome Whitman, sister-in-law of the original owner.

**Long Public Service.** The longest term of public service on the part of any officer of the town during its entire history, was that of Edward Kendall, Esq., who was elected clerk for thirty-two consecutive years, beginning in 1814 and ending with 1845. At the annual meeting of 1846, the infirmities of age reminding him that the time had come when he should give way to a younger man, he caused the following communication to be read to his assembled fellow-citizens, to wit :

"To the voters of the town of Westminster. Gentlemen: In taking leave of the office of Town Clerk [by an election] to which you have for so many successive years honored me, I deem it my duty to lay before you a brief statement of my doings. The close of the present municipal year will number 32 years during which I have held the office. In that time I have made record of 1302 births, 484 deaths, and 408 marriages returned by the proper authorities; published the bans of marriage between 601 couples. Of this number, three cases only occurred where the proceedings were forbidden. I have made record of 1381 pages of proceedings in town meeting and other business pertaining to the office—an average of 43 pages and a fraction per year. I have been absent five town meetings only since I held the office, four of which occurred by ill health the past fall.

"All of which is respectfully submitted,

"Westminster, Feb. 11, 1846

EDWARD KENDALL."

**Death of Town Clerk.** The immediate successor of the preceding in office was his son George, who was chosen to the position for ten years in regular succession, but whose semi-tragic death on the day of his last election terminated his time of service and all his earthly labors. The sad event calls for a brief notice here.

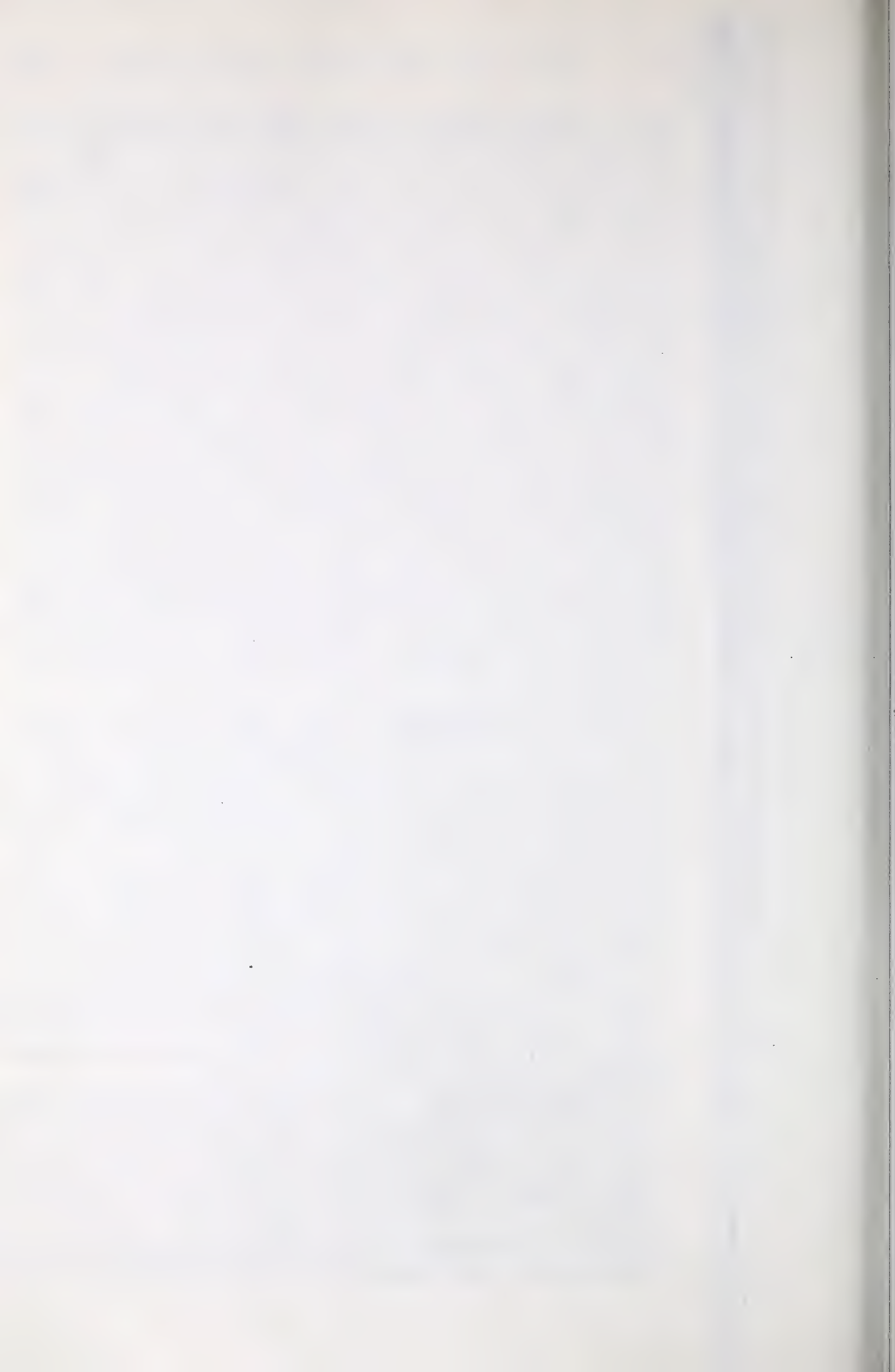
On the morning of the annual town meeting, March 5, 1855, Mr. Kendall was in his official place and attended to the duties devolving upon him, among other things taking the oath of clerk for a faithful discharge of its various trusts the coming



year. Though apparently in his usual health, he yet did not feel quite well when the session closed, but hoped the rest of an hour would bring relief, which it failed to do. He, however, returned after dinner to his work, but finding himself growing rapidly worse, left the hall, sending word to the moderator, his brother Edward, to have a clerk *pro tem* chosen for the remainder of the day. Accompanied by friends he went directly home, scarcely arriving there before breathing his last. Not more than half an hour elapsed after he was seen to go out of the meeting before word came back that he was dead, and announcement was made accordingly. The shock to the audience was indescribable. Every one in the hall rose to his feet in astonishment and grief. An adjournment was made immediately, and the concourse of citizens, after getting what facts were available in the case and exchanging expressions of regret and sorrow, departed to their respective homes weighed down with a profound sense of public and personal bereavement. For Mr. Kendall was deservedly one of the most respected and beloved, as he was one of the most honored, men in town. His funeral, occurring three days later in the church of the First Parish, was attended by a vast assemblage of people coming from near and far to testify to their regard for him, to mourn with his more immediate friends and relatives, and to have confirmed in their minds and hearts the memory of a well-balanced and a well-spent life.

**Bans of Marriage.** The early method of making known the intentions of parties proposing marriage was by public announcement on the part of the town clerk at the close of the regular service of worship on Sunday; the audience, in which nearly every family was represented, waiting in silent expectation and eager curiosity for the voice of that official, after the benediction was pronounced. The information thus communicated was also inscribed upon the public records. This custom continued some years into the present century, when it was superseded by that of having the clerk's certificate of the fact in each case posted in a box prepared for the purpose and affixed to the meetinghouse or otherwise conspicuously located. According to either method the time of publication must include three successive Sundays before the intended union could be legally consummated. The present more simple plan has been in vogue about half a century.

**Obsolete Offices.** In the earlier days of the town's existence there were several posts of duty or places of trust in the public service that are entirely unknown to modern municipal life. Among these were "Sealers of leather," "Surveyors of wheat and flour," "Weighers of corn," "Searchers and Packers of pork and beef"; the special duties of each of which are sufficiently indicated by the names they bear respectively. The "Deer-reeve" was charged with the responsibility of preserving





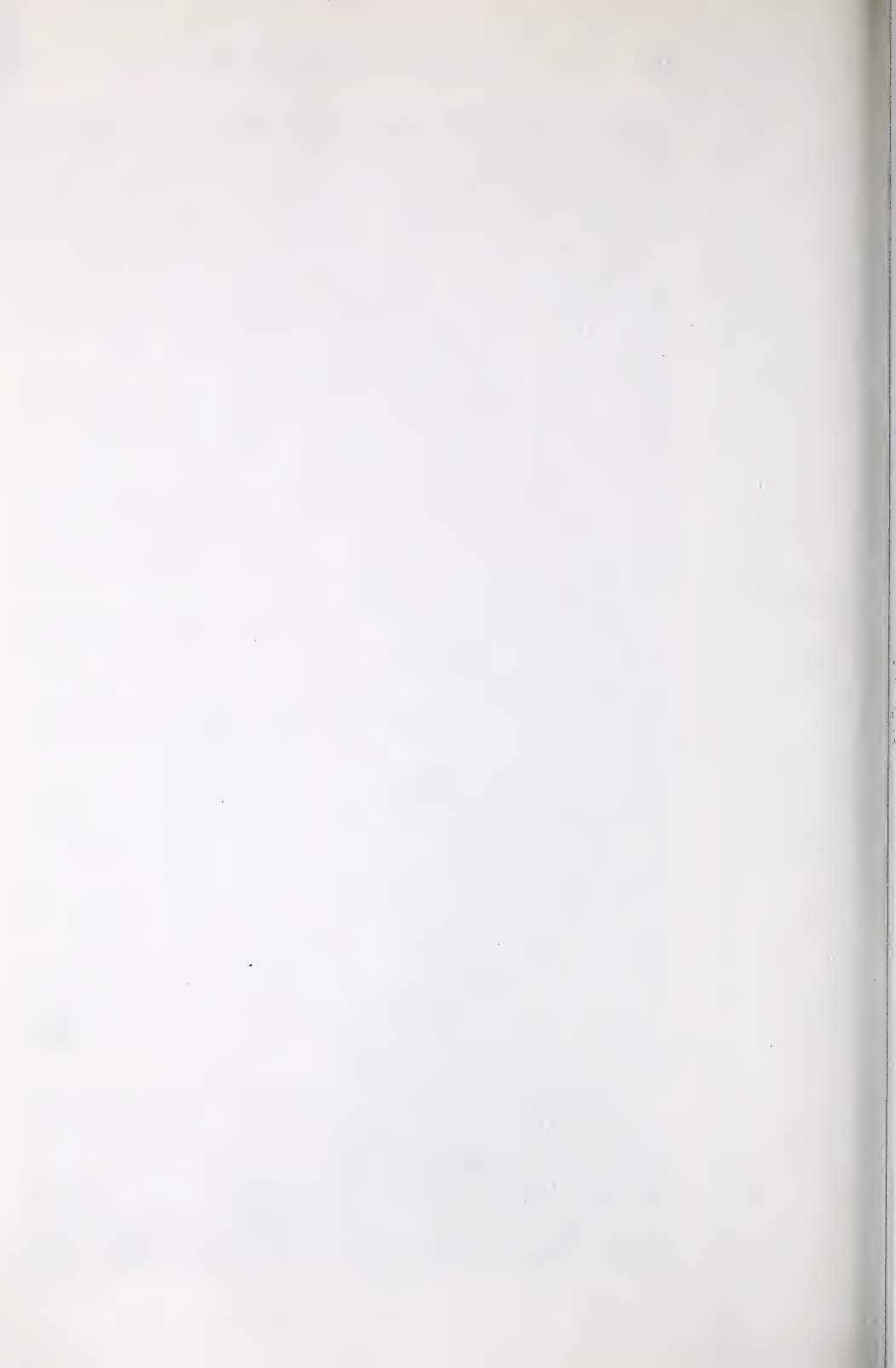
as far as possible the few deer that were still found in these parts, and of making complaint against, and bringing to justice, persons guilty of illegally killing them. The "Hog-reeve" was chosen to look after swine that were permitted to run at large, either by vote of the town or otherwise, and restrain them when likely to do mischief, or report them to their owners.

The most important and conspicuous of these officials of a by-gone age was the "Tithingman," whose duty it was to preserve order in the church during the hours of worship, to make complaint of unbecoming conduct in or about the meetinghouse, and to enforce the respectful observance of the Sabbath day. With sharp and tireless eye he would watch the Sunday congregation, and perchance discovering some playful boy or girl indulging in mischievous pranks, or some adult, overcome by weariness or the soporific influence of the preacher's voice, lost in slumber, would glide stealthily along the aisle to the pew in which the offender sat and, by a more or less gentle rap with his long, slender staff, remind the often unsuspecting one of his misbehavior and of the conduct befitting the hour and place. The office degenerated at length into a mere form or farce, and in 1837 was brought to a perpetual end.

It is not easy to determine at this day the precise nature and extent of the duties pertaining to the office of "Warden" in the olden time. From incidental allusions to him and to his work, however, he seems to have been a sort of moral policeman, whose business it was to look after the general welfare of the community, with especial reference to the condition and care of the poor before the time when a special board of "Overseers" had their interests in charge. The last of the name was chosen in 1790.

**Vaccination for Smallpox.** On the 13th of September, 1792, Dr. Daniel Bartlett, then a practicing physician in town, asked his fellow-citizens for "leave to Build a Hospital and Enoculate such persons as Shall apply to him to have the Small Pox, he indemnifying the Town for any Damage that shall be Sustained by the Spreading of the Said Small Pox." The town, doubting probably the efficacy of the proposed remedy for the loathsome disease, or at least the Doctor's ability to make good any damage that might ensue from his experimentation in that direction, voted "not to admit of an hospital for the inoculation of the small pox." Nine years later, in May, 1801, a similar request received a similar refusal.

A great change, however, soon after came over the community at large in regard to the utility of the contemplated practice, arising from extensive experience both in this country and on foreign shores, and when the matter was brought before the citizens again, March 5, 1810, in the following form: "To see if the Town will pass a vote obliging the inhabitants to have the kine pock inoculation," it met with general favor, a committee being chosen "to Devise the Best plan for giving the kine pox to the



inhabitants," etc. The committee in due time made a satisfactory report, pursuant to which another committee, consisting of Timothy Heywood, Jonas Whitney, Esq., and Ezra Holden, was chosen to superintend the matter of vaccination, whereby it was honored with the sanction of popular approbation. This action led to the voluntary adoption of the practice by the greater part of the population many years before it was made compulsory by the statutes of the Commonwealth.

**Bathing Troughs.** A curious specimen of attempted legislation on the part of the town in the interest of the public health appeared in the year 1818, as shown by an article in the warrant calling a legal meeting on the 2d of November. It was in the form of a proposition "To see if the town will procure eight bathing troughs suitable for warm bathing in case of sickness to be located one in each school district." The town, not convinced of the utility or wisdom of the innovation, "voted and dismissed the article." To whom the public was indebted for this endeavor to enlarge and improve the prevailing practice of the medical profession and introduce new methods into the popular treatment of disease does not appear. Whoever he may have been, he was but the forerunner of a somewhat notable school of therapeutics of a later day, or the suggester of a mode of treatment which has since done much to modify and humanize the healing art in all quarters of the globe.

**Bounty on Crows.** The crow (*corvus Americanus*) has been regarded by the New England farmer from time immemorial a pernicious bird, worthy only of extermination. His music is in no sense "a concord of sweet sounds," and his depredations in the springtime are many and unpardonable. Hence every sportsman has deemed him lawful prey, and every tiller of the soil counted the killing of one a gain to his craft and a blessing to the community. So our fathers felt, and, under the influence of that feeling, offered bounties for his destruction. In 1790 one of two pence was voted in town meeting "to any persons who shall kill crows within the limits of this town in the months of April and May." At a later date the sum was increased to *one shilling*, and finally to *twenty cents* per head. Under this stimulus considerable numbers of them were annually destroyed, and certain persons acquired quite a reputation for skill in this field of public service. Benjamin Howard was paid at one time "for killing eleven crows \$2.20," and William Sawin "sixteen crows, \$3.20." Nevertheless, it is to be questioned whether, after all, this hostility to the crow is well founded; whether he is not more the friend than the enemy of the agriculturist; whether his services, in devouring noxious insects, grubs, and worms; in destroying mice, moles, lizards, and other pests of the field, do not far overbalance his mischiefs and depredations. So ornithologists and optimists at the present day are inclined to believe.





**Slavery.** There were at least eight persons in town during the early period of its history, who, under the laws of the Province, claimed to have property in their fellow human beings. These were Justinian Holden, Michael Brigden, Reuben Miles, James Cohee, Daniel Hoar, Thomas Brigden, and Sarah Blanchard, who had one slave each; also John Headley who had two, and who at his death manumitted them by will as provided in the following extract from that document, to wit: "*Imprimis*, It is my will and pleasure that my negro servants, namely, Prince and Rose his wife at my Decease shall have their Freedom and not be slaves to any man & shall have of my provision a suitable quantity for their support until ye season come that they can raise provisions for themselves and to have ye bed that they commonly lye upon & suitable covering for ye same. And in case of Sickness or Infirmary, that my Ex<sup>r</sup> shall make proper provision for them." What became of the others has not been ascertained. It appears, however, from the Massachusetts archives, that five Negroes were in the army from Westminster in 1776, but they may not all have been slaves. If any still remained in bondage in 1780, they were emancipated by virtue of a clause in the Bill of Rights prefixed to the State Constitution.

**Great Mortality.** In the year 1756 a fearful epidemic, the nature of which is unknown, prevailed to an alarming extent, proving fatal in a large number of cases, especially among children; whole families of them, in some instances, being cut down in a brief period of time. A similar visitation afflicted the place eight years afterward, with similar disastrous consequences. The disease in this case is understood to have been scarlatina or canker-rash. Nathan Whitney, who lost three children, all he had, in the first-named year, was equally bereft by the death of four in 1764.

A scarcely less fatal scourge swept over the town in the year 1800, when, according to carefully kept private records to which the writer has had access, forty of the forty-eight deaths in town were of children of a very tender age. The average annual mortality about that date was only some twenty or twenty-five persons. In the year 1849 fifty-six persons are recorded as having passed away, twice the usual number, more than forty per cent. of whom were but a few years old.

**Floods.** The town has suffered at different dates by an overflow of water in the springtime of the year, whereby much damage was done to roads and bridges and much injury or destruction to other property, both public and private. In the early season of 1801 a disaster of this sort occurred, in consequence of which a special appropriation of money was asked of the town to meet the exigency and relieve the sufferers. The circumstances attending this case are not known. In May, 1850, the giving way of a dam in Ashburnham, by reason of an





unusual fall of rain, caused an unprecedented rise of the waters of Phillips Brook in the north part of the town, which resulted in the demolition of Allen B. Wood's saw- and gristmill, and the washing out in many places of the road running alongside the stream in that neighborhood. In view of this fact a special town meeting was held, at which it was voted "to authorize the Treasurer to borrow what money may be necessary to repair the road."

**Permanent Estates.** Only a very small number of homesteads remain in possession of the families of those first settling upon them. More than ninety per cent. of them have changed owners, and the majority of these several times. It is believed that the only ones to which the same name is attached as at the beginning, are those now occupied, wholly or in part, by Calvin Whitney, Oliver M. Merriam, John F. Sawin, Susan Derby, Charles F. Knowler, Widow Joel Newton, John Minott, Thomas Damon, Widow Alexander Bigelow, Edward C. Estabrook, Charles H. Dupee, Anson and Hiram Ray, and James H. Laws. A few other places are in the hands of descendants of the first occupants of them, though by marriage the name differs from the original one. Such is the case with the Winship farm on Prospect Hill, now in possession of Mrs. Maria (Winship) Comee of Boston; the Seaver farm in the south part of the town, first located upon by Daniel Walker, the great-grandfather of the recent occupant; and possibly others, not known to the writer.

**The Governor's Farm.** It may interest those who call to mind the fact that, at the first division of the lands of the township, a tract of 500 acres, spoken of on page 56, and described on page 61, was set apart and assigned to Jonathan Belcher, then Governor of the Province, to know what use it was put to by His Excellency, and how it passed from his possession to that of the subsequent settlers upon it. It has been supposed and publicly stated that "the Governor built a mansion on the lot and spent a part of his time there." There is no historical evidence that such was the case. The property seems to have passed by gift or otherwise from the possession of the first owner to that of his son, Andrew Belcher, who, in March, 1750, sold the entire territory, unimproved and unoccupied, to Benjamin Houghton of Lancaster. The latter, in turn, conveyed it to his son Ezra, by whom it was divided into lots, and disposed of to Nathaniel Houghton, Lemuel Houghton, Jonathan Sawin, Andrew Derby, Jr., and Reuben Miles, the latter purchasing 340 acres of it. From these parties it passed to the subsequent proprietors, Daniel Adams, Abram Sampson, Asaph Rice, Elias Holden, Thomas Knowler, Jonas and George Miles, etc.

**Mineral Spring.** Few residents of Westminster at the present day are aware that there formerly existed within the



borders of the town, a spring which was assumed to yield waters having valuable medicinal qualities, and which, at one time, had something of a reputation in the neighborhood as a fountain of healing for certain maladies to which mortal flesh is heir. Yet such was the case, and it seems to have been supposed by certain parties that on account of it the place might some day become a resort for diseased and feeble folk from a wide reach of country round about. It was sold in 1808, with a small lot of land around it, by Abner Holden to Ebenezer Sawin, the purchaser probably hoping to realize something of importance and value from it in the manner indicated. But all such anticipations were vain, for the spring long since lost its reputation as a remedial agency, and has passed out of the sight as it has almost out of the memory of men. It was located a short distance south of the present residence of Charles A. Estabrook, near what was Grassy Pond. For some years it has been entirely submerged by the waters of the Wachusettville Reservoir.

**Double Boulder.** On the northerly slope of Wachusett Mountain, in a pasture formerly owned by Dea. J. T. Everett, is a natural curiosity of considerable interest and importance, both on its own account and by reason of the geological inquiries and speculations to which it gives rise. It consists of two immense boulders lying one upon the other, as shown in the accompanying illustration, the upper one being so placed as to seem capable almost of being tilted to and fro by human power, making it a veritable *rocking stone*. It is too heavy and too firmly fixed in its position, however, for that. Each of these huge blocks of rock measures about six feet on a side, containing therefore some two hundred cubic feet and weighing perhaps fifteen tons. The two, related as they are, constitute an object of curiosity to the common visitor as well as to the scientist, who sees in them tokens of those mighty agencies in nature by which, untold ages ago, they were brought from their native bed in the far away north and placed in their unique position high up on the mountain side, awakening the interest and wonder of many passing generations.

**Alum Rock.** Such is the name given to an abrupt ledge protruding from the earth to the height of eight or ten feet, in an open field near what is called Knower's Corner, in the southerly part of the town. The moisture oozing slowly from its pores and fissures, or derived from the surrounding atmosphere, is strongly impregnated with the chemical salt indicated by its title. The rock is undoubtedly a form of argillaceous slate which is readily decomposed, and which gives to whatever it is brought in contact with, the sweet astringent taste always characterizing the alum of commerce.

**Personal Names.** The history of Westminster illustrates the well known fact that the use of double names, as they are termed, is an invention or custom of very recent date. Up





to the year 1800 but one person had settled in town who had more than one Christian name, and that was Jonathan Warren Smith. And in a tax list of two hundred and seventy persons, only two, Edward J. Locke and George W. Whitcomb, were distinguished by a middle name. Soon after that date the innovation became a growing custom, increasing with the advance of time, until, at present, there are but few residents here, as is the case elsewhere, with a single Christian name.

**Telegraph and Telephone.** Telegraphic communication with the outside world was secured many years ago through the instrumentality of the railroad corporation, an office accessible to the public having been established at the station. More recently, through the agency of private parties, similar privileges are enjoyed by telephone, a transmitter having been put into the store of George W. Bruce at the Center, and also at the house of Mrs. Sarah P. Brown, Wachusett Lake.

**Wachusett Park.** In or about the year 1873 Simeon L. Bolton, who resided on the original Barnard place at the foot of Wachusett Mountain, conceived the idea of opening to the general public, for various purposes of a social and festive character, during the warmer portion of the year, a section of the wooded territory skirting the western borders of the neighboring pond. That conception ripened into a definite project which resulted in the early purchase of the land in view, and the proper clearing of it and fitting it up with conveniences and appliances suited to the end proposed. A hotel and open hall or pavilion were erected, with accompanying stables and out-buildings, and the locality soon gained a reputation for itself in all the region round about, as an attractive and desirable place of summer resort. Improvements have been made, new features of interest have been added, and new accommodations provided with the passing years, so that its use in its proper season is called into frequent requisition for pleasure parties, social reunions, and gatherings of various sort, including the "Old Folks' Picnic,"—the enjoyment and the benefit of which are greatly enhanced by the beauty of the situation and the glory of the surrounding world. Considerate attention and a large measure of liberty are accorded to visitors, and many are the days of the summer time made vocal and joyous with the converse, laughter, song, and speech of those who frequent this increasingly popular place of resort and recreation.

**Anecdotes.** A few stories of the olden time, in addition to those woven into the body of this work, have an interest, personal or otherwise, which makes them seem worthy of preservation. Several of them pertain to experiences of one sort or another with wild beasts—wolves or bears—with which the inhabitants were more or less troubled for many years after the settlement took place. They are given under appropriate titles.



1. **THE DISCONCERTED BEAR.**—On a certain year the garden and barn yard of Josiah Wheeler, who lived on Bean Porridge Hill, were subject to occasional visits from a mischief-making bear—a denizen of the neighboring woods—who by his agility or cunning managed for some time to elude the search of the hunter bent on killing him. His approaches and depredations were usually in the night, when he could not be seen and followed to his hiding place, or shot. But at length, becoming emboldened by hunger or immunity from attack, he essayed a marauding expedition in the open day. An unusual commotion among the chickens called Mrs. Wheeler to the door to see what was going on, when she discovered the ugly beast slowly approaching. She was alone in the house, and the men of the family were at work too far away for her to call them. Hardly pausing to think what she should do, she rushed out towards the bear with terrific screams and defiant gestures, flinging violently an immense apron, which she chanced to have on, almost in the face of the unwelcome visitor. Unused to such a salute and such a weapon of warfare, the unwelcome visitor, after a moment's pause as if in meditation, turned upon his heels and made for the woods as fast as his clumsy legs could carry him. The men returning in due time and learning what had occurred, set a trap for his bearship and ere long he was caught and killed.

2. **THE NARROW ESCAPE.**—Two daughters of Mr. Josiah Puffer, who lived on the place in the south part of the town lately owned and occupied by Cephas Bush, returning one evening from a neighbor's, were chased by two wolves which, getting upon their track some distance away, caught up with them almost as they were entering their father's dwelling house, but not in time to do them harm. Mr. Puffer at once seized his gun, rushed out and shot one of the intruders in his own dooryard. The girls were Thankful, who married William Edgell, and Lucena, afterwards Mrs. Asa Merriam. Though not hurt, they were terribly frightened, and took good care to avoid all similar experiences afterward.

3. **THE LYING WOLF.**—It is said that there is "honor among thieves" and there seems to be truthfulness among wolves, judging from the following story which claims to be well authenticated. Similar tales have been told before.

The Mr. Puffer just spoken of owned a 4th Div. lot in the southwest part of the town, some hundred rods or more south of where W. E. Chambers now resides. (See A. H. No. 77.) It was so far from his home that, when clearing a portion of it up for a future farmstead, he would sometimes spend several days there at a time, taking provisions enough to serve his need and finding shelter at night in a rude hut or shanty which he had

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